



YALE  
MEDICAL LIBRARY



HISTORICAL  
LIBRARY



316

*from M.*  
19 Notting Hill Square. London W.  
MEDICAL WOMEN

## Two Essays

BY

SOPHIA JEX-BLAKE.



I.

Medicine as a Profession for Women.

II.

Medical Education of Women.



EDINBURGH:

WILLIAM OLIPHANT & Co., 57 FREDERICK STREET.

LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS, & Co.

1872.

[All Rights Reserved.]

JOHN LINDSAY, PRINTER, 104 HIGH STREET, EDINBURGH.

Hist.  
R692  
872j

Dedicated  
TO  
DR LUCY SEWALL,

FROM WHOSE DAILY LIFE

† FIRST LEARNED WHAT INCALCULABLE BLESSINGS

MAY BE CONFERRED ON THE SICK AND SUFFERING OF HER OWN SEX

BY A NOSTLE AND PURE-MINDED WOMAN

WHO IS ALSO

A THOROUGHLY SCIENTIFIC PHYSICIAN.





I.

# Medicine as a Profession for Women.

REPRINTED, WITH LARGE ADDITIONS,  
FROM "WOMAN'S WORK AND WOMAN'S CULTURE."



"WE deny the right of any portion of the species to decide for another portion, or any individual for another individual, what is and what is not their 'proper sphere.' The proper sphere for all human beings is the largest and highest which they are able to attain to. What this is cannot be ascertained without complete liberty of choice."—Mrs J. S. MILL.



## MEDICINE AS A PROFESSION FOR WOMEN.

“The universe shall henceforth speak for you  
And witness, She who did this thing, was born  
To do it ; claims her license in her work.  
And so with more works. Whoso cures the plague,  
Though twice a woman, shall be called a leech.”  
*“Aurora Leigh.”*

It is a very comfortable faith to hold that “whatever is, is best,” not only in the dispensations of Providence, but in the social order of daily life ; but it is a faith which is perhaps best preserved by careful avoidance of too much inquiry into facts. The theory, if applied to past as well as to present times, would involve us in some startling contradictions, for there is hardly any act, habit, or custom which has not been held meritorious and commendable in one state of society, and detestable and evil in some other. If we believe that there are eternal principles of right and wrong, wisdom and equity, far above and greater than the “public opinion” of any one age or country, we must acknowledge the absolute obligation of inquiring, whenever matters of importance are at stake, on what grounds the popular

opinions rest, and how far they are the result of habit, custom, and prejudice, or the real outgrowth of deep convictions and beliefs inherent in the most sacred recesses of human nature. While the latter command ever our deepest reverence, as the true “*vox populi, vox Dei*,” nothing can be more superficial, frivolous, and fallacious than the former.

In a country where precedent has so much weight as in England, it doubly behoves us to make the distinction, and, while gratefully accepting the safeguard offered against inconsiderate and precipitate change, to beware that old custom is not suffered permanently to hide from our eyes any truth which may be struggling into the light. I suppose that no thinking man will pretend that the world has now reached the zenith of truth and knowledge, and that no further upward progress is possible ; on the contrary, we must surely believe that each year will bring with it its new lesson ; fresh lights will constantly be dawning above the horizon, and perhaps still oftener discoveries will be re-discovered, truths once acknowledged but gradually obscured or forgotten will emerge again into day, and a constantly recurring duty will lie before every one who believes in life as a responsible time of action, and not as a period of mere vegetative existence, to “*prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.*”

The above considerations arise naturally in connexion with the subject of this paper, which is too often set aside by the general public, who, perhaps, hardly appreciate its scope, and are not yet fully aroused to the importance of the questions involved in the general issue. We are told so often that nature and custom have alike decided against the admission of women to the Medical Profession, and that there is in such admission something repugnant to the right order of things, that when we see growing evidences of a different opinion among a minority perhaps, but a minority which already includes many of our most earnest thinkers of both sexes, and increases daily, it surely becomes a duty for all who do not, in the quaint language of Sharpe, "have their thinking, like their washing, done out," to test these statements by the above principles, and to see how far their truth is supported by evidence.

In the first place, let us take the testimony of Nature in the matter. If we go back to primeval times, and try to imagine the first sickness or the first injury suffered by humanity, does one instinctively feel that it must have been the *man's* business to seek means of healing, to try the virtues of various herbs, or to apply such rude remedies as might occur to one unused to the strange spectacle of human suffering? I think that few would maintain that such ministration

would come most naturally to the man, and be instinctively avoided by the woman; indeed, I fancy that the presumption would be rather in the other direction. And what is such ministration but the germ of the future profession of medicine?

Nor, I think, would the inference be different if we appealed to the actual daily experience of domestic life. If a child falls down stairs, and is more or less seriously hurt, is it the father or the mother (where both are without medical training) who is most equal to the emergency, and who applies the needful remedies in the first instance? Or again, in the heart of the country, where no doctor is readily accessible, is it the squire and the parson, or their respective wives, who are usually consulted about the ailments of half the parish? Of course it may be said that such practice is by no means scientific, but merely empirical, and this I readily allow; but that fact in no way affects my argument that women are *naturally* inclined and fitted for medical practice. And if this be so, I do not know who has the right to say that they shall not be allowed to make their work scientific when they desire it, but shall be limited to merely the mechanical details and wearisome routine of nursing, while to men is reserved all intelligent knowledge of disease, and all study of the laws by which health may be preserved or restored.

Again, imagine if you can that the world has reached its present standing point, that society exists as now in every respect but this,—that the art of healing has never been conceived as a separate profession, that no persons have been set apart to receive special education for it, and that in fact empirical “domestic medicine,” in the strictest sense, is the only thing of the kind existing. Suppose now that society suddenly awoke to the great want so long unnoticed, that it was recognized by all that a scientific knowledge of the human frame in health and in disease, and a study of the remedies of various kinds which might be employed as curative agents, would greatly lessen human suffering, and that it was therefore resolved at once to set apart some persons who should acquire such knowledge, and devote their lives to using it for the benefit of the rest of the race. In such case, would the natural idea be that members of each sex should be so set apart for the benefit of their own sex respectively,—that men should fit themselves to minister to the maladies of men, and women to those of women,—or that one sex only should undertake the care of the health of all, under all circumstances? For myself, I have no hesitation in saying that the former seems to me the *natural* course, and that to civilized society, if unaccustomed to the idea, the proposal that persons of one sex should in every case be con-

sulted about every disease incident to those of the other, would be very repugnant ; nay, that were every other condition of society the same as now, it would probably be held wholly inadmissable. I maintain that not only is there nothing strange or unnatural in the idea that women are the fit physicians for women, and men for men ; but on the contrary, that it is only custom and habit which blind society to the extreme strangeness and incongruity of any other notion.

I am indeed far from pretending, as some have done, that it is morally wrong for men to be the medical attendants of women, and that grave mischiefs are the frequent and natural results of their being placed in that position. I believe that these statements not only materially injure the cause they profess to serve, but that they are in themselves false. In my own experience as a medical student, I have had far too much reason to acknowledge the honour and delicacy of feeling habitually shown by the gentlemen of the medical profession, not to protest warmly against any such injurious imputation. I am very sure that in the vast majority of cases, the motives and conduct of medical men in this respect are altogether above question, and that every physician who is also a gentleman is thoroughly able, when consulted by a patient in any case whatever, to remember only the human suffering brought before him and the



scientific bearing of its details ; for as was said not very long ago by a most eminent London surgeon, "Whoever is not able, in the course of practice, to put the idea of sex out of his mind, is not fit for the medical profession at all." It will, however, occur to most people that the medical man is only one of the parties concerned, and that it is possible that a difficulty which may be of no importance from his scientific standpoint, may yet be very formidable indeed to the far more sensitive and delicately organized feelings of his patient, who has no such armour of proof as his own, and whose very condition of suffering may entail an even exaggerated condition of nervous susceptibility on such points.<sup>1</sup> At any rate, when we hear so many assertions about natural instincts and social propriety, I cannot but assert that their evidence, such as it is, is wholly for, and not against, the cause of women as physicians for their own sex.

If we take next the ground of custom, I think the position of those who would oppose the medical education of women is far less tenable than is generally supposed ; indeed, that a recent writer stated no more than the truth when he asserted that "the obloquy which attends innovation belongs to the men who exclude women from a profession in which they once had a recognised place."<sup>2</sup> I believe that few people who have not

<sup>1</sup> See *Note A.*

<sup>2</sup> *Athenæum*, Sept. 28, 1867.

carefully considered the question from an historical point of view have any idea of the amount of evidence that may be brought to support this view of the case.<sup>1</sup>

Referring to the earliest classical times, we find distinct mention in the *Iliad* of a woman skilled in the science of medicine,<sup>2</sup> and a similar reference occurs also in the *Odyssey*.<sup>3</sup> Euripides is no less valuable a witness on this point. He describes Queen Phædra<sup>4</sup> as disturbed in mind and out of health, and represents the nurse as thus addressing her: "If thy complaint be anything of the more secret kind, here are women at hand to compose the disease. But if thy distress is *such as may be told to men*, tell it, that it may be reported to the physicians;" thus indicating a

<sup>1</sup> In his "Essai sur les Femmes," Thomas points out that "Chez la plupart des sauvages . . la médecine et la magie sont entre les mains des femmes."

<sup>2</sup> The passage is thus rendered by Professor Blackie :—

"His eldest born, hight Agamede, with golden hair,

A leech was she, and well she knew all herbs on ground that grew."

(*Iliad*, xi. 739).

In his Notes the translator remarks that "it seems undeniable that women have a natural vocation for exercising certain branches of the medical profession with dexterity and tact. . . It is gratifying therefore to find that a field of activity which has been recently claimed for the sex . . finds a precedent in the venerable pages of the *Iliad*. . . In fact, nothing was more common in ancient times than medical skill possessed by females," in proof of which assertion he mentions CEnone and others. (Professor Blackie's "Homer and the *Iliad*." Edmonston & Douglas.)

<sup>3</sup> *Odyssey*, iv. 227.

<sup>4</sup> *Hippolytus*, 293-7.

prevailing public opinion that there were natural and rigid limits to the medical attendance of men and women, and that therefore some women were specially trained to do what the regular physicians must leave undone. It is at least remarkable to find such evidence of general feeling on this matter in a state of society supposed to possess much less delicacy and refinement than our own.

We find records of several Grecian women who were renowned for their medical skill, among whom may be instanced Olympias of Thebes, whose medical learning is said to be mentioned by Pliny ; and Aspasia, from whose writings on the diseases of women, quotations are preserved in the works of Aëtius, a Mesopotamian physician.<sup>1</sup> On the authority of Hyginus rests the history of Agnodice, the Athenian maiden whose skill and success in medicine was the cause of the legal opening of the medical profession to all the free-born women of the State.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Finauer's "Allgemeines Verzeichniss gelehrten Frauenzimmer."

<sup>2</sup> I subjoin as a curiosity the quaint version of this story that is given in a letter from Mrs Celleor (a fashionable midwife of the reign of James II.), published in 1687, and now to be found in the British Museum. After saying that "Among the subtile Athenians a law at one time forbade women to study or practise medicine or physick on pain of death, which law continued some time, during which many women perished, both in child-bearing and by private diseases, their modesty not permitting them to admit of men either to deliver or cure them," she continues, "Till God stirred up the spirit of Agnodice, a noble maid, to pity

In more modern times, when almost all learning was garnered into the religious houses, which were not only the libraries but the hospitals of the day, it seems evident that the care of the sick and wounded fell at least as often to the share of the Nunneries as of the Monasteries, and probably medical skill, such as it was, found place among the sisters quite as often as among the brethren of the various religious Orders.

the miserable condition of her own sex, and hazard her life to help them ; which to enable herself to do, she apparelled her like a man, and became the scholar of Hierophilos, the most learned physician of the time ; and having learned the art, she found out a woman that had long languished under private diseases, and made proffer of her service to cure her, which the sick person refused, thinking her to be a man ; but, when Agnodice discovered that she was a maid, the woman committed herself into her hands, who cured her perfectly ; and after her many others, with the like skill and industry, so that in a short time she became the successful and beloved physician of the whole sex." When her sex became known to the public, " she was like to be condemned to death for transgressing the law . . which, coming to the ears of the noble women, they ran before the Areopagites, and the house being encompassed by most women of the city, the ladies entered before the judges, and told them they would no longer account them for husbands and friends, but for cruel enemies that condemned her to death who restored to them their health, protesting they would all die with her if she were put to death. . . This caused the magistrates to disannul the law, and make another, which gave gentlewomen leave to study and practise all parts of physick to their own sex, giving large stipends to those that did it well and carefully. And there were many noble women who studied that practice, and taught it publicly in their schools as long as Athens flourished in learning."

The old ballad of Sir Isumbras gives one illustration out of many of the prevailing state of things, relating how the nuns received the wounded knight, and how

“ Ilke a day they made salves new,  
And laid them on his wounds,  
They gafe hym metis and drynkes lythe,  
And heled the knyghte wonder swythe.”<sup>1</sup>

It may be remembered that Sir Walter Scott,<sup>2</sup> after describing how Rebecca “proceeded, with her own hands, to examine and bind up the wounds,” goes on to remark, “The youngest reader of romances and romantic ballads must recollect how often the females, during the dark ages, as they are called, were initiated into the mysteries of surgery. . . . The Jews, both male and female, possessed and practised the medical science in all its branches.”

In the fourteenth century, when the Medical School of Salerno enjoyed high reputation, we find record of a female physician named Abella, who lived there, and wrote in Latin various works on medicine.<sup>3</sup>

Early in the next century an Italian lady, Dorotea Bocchi, was actually Professor of Medi-

<sup>1</sup> “Thornton Romances,” Camden Society.

<sup>2</sup> “Ivanhoe,” chap. xxviii.

<sup>3</sup> “Nuovo Dizionario Istorico ;” Bassano, 1796.

cine at the University of Bologna,<sup>1</sup> and among the traditions of the same University is preserved the name of Alessandra Gigliani, who, in even earlier times, was a learned student of anatomy.<sup>2</sup>

In the sixteenth century, at Alcaarez in Spain, lived Olivia Sabuco de Nantes, who "had a large knowledge of science and medicine," and whose medical works were printed at Madrid in 1588.<sup>3</sup>

It is clear that in Great Britain at an early period women were commonly found among the irregular practitioners of medicine; and it is equally clear that their male competitors greatly desired to deprive them of the right to practise. In 1421 a petition was presented to Henry V., praying that "no woman use the practyse of fisyk under payne of long emprisonment."<sup>4</sup> Within a few years after the first incorporation of the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, an Act<sup>5</sup> was passed for the relief and protection of "Divers honest psones, *as well men as women*, whom God hathe endued with the knowledge of the nature, kind, and operaçon of certeyne herbes, rotes, and waters, and the using and ministering them to suche as be payned with customable diseases, for neighbour-

<sup>1</sup> Fachini's "Prospetto Biografico delle Donne Italiane," Venezia, 1824.

<sup>2</sup> Medici's "Scuola Anatomica di Bologna."

<sup>3</sup> Finauer.

<sup>4</sup> *New York Medical Gazette*, April 24, 1869.

<sup>5</sup> 34 Henry VIII. 8.

hode and Goddes sake, and of pitie and charytie,” because the “Companie and Fellowship of Surgeons of London, mynding onlie their owne lucre and nothing the profit or ease of the diseased or patient, have sued, vexed, and troubled,” the aforesaid “honest psones,” who were henceforth to be allowed “to practyse, use, and mynistrer in and to any outwarde sore, swelling, or disease, any herbes, oyntements, bathes, pultes or emplanters, according to their cooning experience and knowledge . . . without sute, vexation, penaltie, or losse of their goods.”<sup>1</sup>

This provision clearly referred to general practice other than that of midwifery, which latter branch of the profession was then, as for centuries both before and after, almost exclusively in the hands of women. The very word *midwife*, with its Latin synonym “*obstetrix*,” is sufficiently significant on this point, for in neither language has it any masculine equivalent, and the clumsy term “Man-midwife” served, when first needed and used, to mark the general sense of what the writer in the *Athenæum* forcibly calls “masculine intrusion into that which natural instinct assigns to woman as her proper field of labour;” and this

<sup>1</sup> Maitland, in giving an account of the foundation of the Edinburgh College of Physicians in 1681, begins by saying that “the Practice of Physick had been greatly abused in Edinburgh by foreign Impostors, Quacks, Empirics, and illiterate Persons, both men and women.”—Maitland’s History of Edinburgh, 1753.



same very suggestive title is the only one which at the present day in legal phraseology distinguishes the male practitioners of this branch of medical art.

From the time of Moses onwards this part of the profession has always been mainly in the hands of women, and in many countries of Europe no other usage has ever prevailed. The first regular French medical society, "La confrairie de St Cosme and St Damien," included within its organization the Company of Midwives,<sup>1</sup> and from that time down to the present it seems in France to have been the custom to give to these women a regular education, terminating in sufficient examinations, an example which England would have done well to follow.

In this country, however, midwives appear to have held a most respectable position some centuries ago, and a curious idea of their importance, their duties, and their credit, may be gathered from a MS. volume (without date) now preserved in the British Museum,<sup>2</sup> which was evidently

<sup>1</sup> The statutes of 1268 ordained that "les matrones ou sages femmes sont aussi de la dite confrairie et subjects ausdits deux chirurgiens jurez du Roy au Chastelet, qui ont dressé certains statuts et ordonnances tant pour les droicts de la confrairie que pour leur estat de sage femme, qu'elles doivent observer et garder." —Du Breul's "Antiquités de Paris," pub. 1639.

<sup>2</sup> "The Midwife's Deputie . . . composed for the use of my wife (a sworne Midwife), by Edward Poeton, Petworth, Licentiate in Physick and Chyrurgery."



written at a time when hardly any but women were employed in the "mysteries of the profession," and when it was a comparatively rare thing, that needed to be specially advised in certain cases, for them to "make use of (*i.e.*, call in) a physitian." The writer remarks that "it is meet that the midwife be a woman well read and well experienced," and gives a caution that "drunkenness is a sordid sin in any who use it, but is a blemish worthy greater blame in ministers, magistrates, midwives, physitiens, and chirurgeons."

Mrs Celleor, in her letter previously referred to,<sup>1</sup> tells us that in 1642, "the physitiens and chirurgeons contending about it, midwifery was adjudged a chirurgical operation, and midwives were licensed at Chirurgeon's Hall, but not till they had passed three examinations before six skilful midwives, and as many chirurgeons;" but for some reason (connected probably with their occasional baptismal functions) the midwives were, in 1662, referred for their licence to Doctors' Commons, thus losing their official connexion with the medical world.

How it came that English midwives fell gradually from their high estate is partly explained by a very public-spirited book (with the appropriate motto "*Non sibi sed aliis*") written by a surgeon

<sup>1</sup> "Letter to Dr ——" written by Elizabeth Celleor, "from my house in Arundel Street, Strand, Jan. 16, 1687-8."

in 1736.<sup>1</sup> The writer adverts to the accusations of ignorance then brought against the midwives, and remarks that “the only method by which this fatal distemper can be cured, is to put it in the power of midwomen to qualify themselves thoroughly and at a moderate expense. . . . . To which method of qualifying themselves I doubt not the midwomen will object, and say that they would readily be at any reasonable expense and fatigue to be so thoroughly instructed, but it is not in their power. The midwomen cannot, and the midmen will not instruct them. The midmen will object and say that the midwomen want both capacity and strength (instruct them as ye please). To which I reply (*ore rotundo, plenis buccis*) that it is not want of capacity, docility, strength, or activity . . . . which is evident to a demonstration from the successful practice of women in the Hôtel Dieu at Paris (the best school for midwifery now in Europe). . . . . Would not any person then be deservedly laughed at who should assert that our women are not as capable of performing their office had they the same instruction as the French women?” This chivalrous surgeon then proposes that regular provision should be made for proper instruction, and for examinations by two

<sup>1</sup> “A Short Account of the State of Midwifery in London. By John Douglas, Surgeon. Dedicated to the Right Hon. Lady Walpole.”

surgeons (who have lectured to the women), “and six or seven other persons appointed by His Majesty, because I don’t think it reasonable that so many people’s bread should depend on the humour or caprice of two men only;” adding that “If some such scheme was put in execution, I’m satisfied that in a very few years there would not be an ignorant midwife in England, and consequently the great agonies most women suffer at the very sight of a man would be almost entirely prevented,” and great expense and much life saved.

However, we must suppose that these noble words of protest fell upon deaf ears, and the midwives, being left in their ignorance, their practice gradually passed into the hands of the medical men, who had every advantage of learning at their command.<sup>1</sup>

It is, however, only very recently that men-midwives have been allowed to attend on royal patients in this country; indeed, I believe that the Princess Charlotte was the first to establish

<sup>1</sup> It may be interesting to give the following quotation on this subject from a popular magazine of thirty years ago:—“The accoucheur’s is a profession nearly altogether wrested out of the hands of women, for which Nature has surely fitted them, if opinion permitted education to finish Nature’s work. But women are held in the bonds of ignorance, and then pronounced of deficient capacity, or blamed for wanting the knowledge they are sternly prevented from acquiring.”—*Tait’s Magazine*, June, 1841.

the precedent, and that our present Sovereign was the first queen who followed it. In a very interesting series of papers, by Dr Aveling, recently published in the *Lancet*,<sup>1</sup> accounts have been given of a number of the royal midwives whose names have been honourably preserved in history, such as Alice Dennis, who attended Anne of Denmark, and received a fee of £100 “for her pains and attendance upon the Queen, as of His Highness’s free gift and reward, without account, imprest, or other charge to be set on her for the same.”

The same writer mentions that Margaret Mercer was sent express from England in 1603 to attend on “His Majesty’s dearest daughter, the Princess Electress Palatine.”

It is also recorded that “Mrs Labany attended Mary of Modena, Queen of James II., when she was delivered, on June 10th, 1687, of James Francis Edward, afterwards called the Pretender.”<sup>2</sup> Mrs Wilkins, another midwife, seems also to have been present on this occasion, and it is stated that each of these persons received a fee of five hundred guineas for her services.

<sup>1</sup> *Lancet*, April 13th and 20th ; May 4th ; June 1st ; 1872.

<sup>2</sup> It will be remembered that an attempt was made to throw doubt on the birth of this prince, but Dr Aveling remarks that “Dr Chamberlen, in his letter to the Princess Sophia, showed the absurdity of this hypothesis”—(i.e., of the charge of conspiracy).

It is well known that Queen Charlotte was always attended by a woman,<sup>1</sup> and the late Duchess of Kent employed the Frau von Siebold, of whom mention is made elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

Now that public attention is awaking to the subject, and educated women are once more desirous of undertaking this peculiarly womanly work, we may indeed anticipate, with the already quoted writer in the *Athenæum*, that a reactionary movement will soon make itself felt, and that the usage "which even up to the present time a large proportion of our English families, especially those of our northern towns and outlying country districts, have never adopted, will most likely be discontinued in all classes of English society before the end of the present century."

On the Continent of Europe, owing to their better education, the midwives retain much of the position that they have for a time lost in England; and we hear that in Russia "a medical

<sup>1</sup> "Delicacy had in those days so far the ascendancy, that the obstetrical art was principally practised by females, and on this occasion the Queen was delivered by Mrs Stephen, Dr Hunter being in attendance among the ladies of the bedchamber, in case of his professional assistance being required."—Huish's "*Life of George IV.*"

<sup>2</sup> "It is a curious coincidence, considering the future connection of the children, that Madame Siebold, the accoucheuse spoken of above as attending the Ducbess of Coburg at the birth of Prince Albert (August 1819), had only three months before attended the Ducbess of Kent at the birth of the Princess Victoria."—*Early Years of the Prince Consort.*

man is very rarely called in ; notwithstanding, fatal cases are of far less frequent occurrence in Russia than in England ;” and the same authority tells us that ladies practising midwifery are admitted into society as doctors would be, and are well paid, both by the Government and by private fees.<sup>1</sup>

While thus briefly tracing out the history of midwifery in modern times, and the causes which led to its practice passing from the hands of women into those of men, I have not paused to mention, in due chronological order, those women who, in the last three centuries, have been distinguished for a knowledge of the other branches of Medicine and Surgery. Of these I will now enumerate a few, though my time and space are far too limited either to give a complete list, or to relate any but the most prominent particulars of each case mentioned ; but I can promise that any one who will consult the authorities quoted will be abundantly repaid by the long and interesting details that I am forced to pass over in almost every instance.

In the seventeenth century, in England, one of the women most noted for medical skill was Lady Ann Halket,<sup>2</sup> born in 1622, daughter of the then

<sup>1</sup> “Rites and Customs of the Greco-Russian Church,” by Madame Romanoff. Rivingtons, 1868.

<sup>2</sup> Ballard’s “Memoirs of several Ladies of Great Britain.” Oxford, 1752.

provost of Eton College. "Next to the study of Divinity she seems to have taken most delight in those of Physick and Surgery, in which she was no mean proficient; nay, some of the best physicians in the kingdom did not think themselves slighted when persons of the greatest quality did consult her in their distempers, even when they attended them as their ordinary physicians. Many from England, Holland, and the remotest parts of the kingdom, have sent to her for things of her preparing; and many whose diseases have proved obstinate under all the methods of physicians, have at length, by the physicians' own advice, been recommended and sent to her care, and have been recovered by her."

In 1644 was born Elizabeth Lawrence, afterwards wife of the Rev. Samuel Bury, of Bristol, who wrote her life,<sup>1</sup> and who bears witness that "it was not possible there should be a more observant, tender, indulgent, and compassionate wife than she was; a more sympathising spirit is very rarely found." He records that "she took much pleasure in Anatomy and Medicine, being led and prompted to it partly by her own ill health, and partly with a desire of being useful." The difficulties that she encountered in her studies may be guessed, since "she would often regret

<sup>1</sup> "An Account of the Life and Death of Mrs Elizabeth Bury." Bristol, 1721.



that so many learned men should be so uncharitable to her sex, and be so loath to assist their feebler faculties when they were anywise disposed to an accurate search into things profitable and curious. Especially as they would all so readily own that souls were not distinguished by sexes. And therefore she thought it would have been an honourable pity in them to have offered something in condescension to their capacities, rather than have propagated a despair of their information to future ages." Her husband, however, tells us that "she improved so much, that many of the great masters of the Faculty have often been startled by her stating the most nice and difficult cases in such proper terms;" and, remarking that, "How much knowledge and skill soever she attained in the practice of Physick, by long observation, conversation, and experience, yet she was very distrustful of herself," he adds that the "instances of her successes in the preservation of human lives were not easily numbered."

As a contemporary of these Englishwomen, we find in Germany Elizabeth Keillen, who published several medical works, and died in 1699. She is said by Finauer to have had "great knowledge of medicine and chemistry."

In comparatively recent times, Bologna was remarkable as ever for its liberal encouragement



of learned women, and about the middle of the last century the Chair of Anatomy at that University was filled by Anna Morandi Mazzolini, whose exquisitely delicate anatomical models, executed in wax, became the pride of the Museum at Bologna. She first became interested in the study of Anatomy in consequence of her wish to help her husband, who was a distinguished anatomist, and a maker of anatomical designs and models. He fell into ill-health and mental despondency, and therefore "his wife, loving him dearly, and fearing that he would desist from his work, gave herself up to his comfort; and for this purpose became herself an anatomical sculptor, reading works of anatomy, consulting anatomical tables and preparations, taking theoretical and practical lessons from her husband, and, marvellous to say, even dissecting dead bodies with resolute mind, and with incredible perseverance. . . . Too long to describe are the works executed in wax by the able hands of this illustrious woman. They were collected in five elegant cases in our Anatomical Museum. . . . The fourth case encloses delicate illustrations of all the parts belonging to the senses of sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch—stupendous works in which she surpassed herself, and also her husband, and his colleague, Ercole Lelli. . . . These models were for some time kept in her own house, and each one who saw

them spread her renown, so that through distant countries was spread the fame of her works, so that every learned and distinguished person passing through Bologna was solicitous to visit and know personally the maker of these wonders."<sup>1</sup> Signora Mazzolini also made original discoveries in anatomical science, which obtained for her many marks of distinction from the learned colleges and societies of the day. She was offered a Chair at Milan, with increased revenues, but preferred to remain at Bologna, where she lived till her death in 1774. Medici, in his records of the Anatomical School of Bologna, speaks of this lady with profound respect, as distinguished alike by "rare powers, great erudition, gracious manners, and delicate and gentle temperament," and relates that her fame reached the ears of the Emperor Joseph II., who visited her in 1769, and "having seen her works and heard her conversation," loaded her with public honours. Her example seems to have inspired others of her countrywomen to follow in the steps of one so honoured, alike in the stern duties of her profession, and in the sanctities of household life; for in the course of the next half century several Italian women availed themselves of the thorough medical education which the Italian Universities never refused.

<sup>1</sup> "Scuola Anatomica di Bologna," by Medici.

In 1788 Maria Petraccini<sup>1</sup> took a degree in medicine at Florence, and we find her, a little later, lecturing on anatomy at Ferrara, in presence of the medical professors. She married Signor Feretti, and has left several works on the physical education of children.

Her daughter, Zaffira Feretti, seems to have inherited her mother's talents, for she studied Surgery in the University of Bologna, and there received a medical degree<sup>2</sup> in May 1800. She obtained an appointment under the Italian Government, and for some time lived in Ancona acting as Director-General of the midwives in all parts of the country. She afterwards went to Turkey, and died at Patras in 1817.

Maria Mastellari seems also to have been a woman of unusual talent, and "progressed diligently in the most rigid sciences." She obtained a medical degree at Bologna in 1799. She subsequently became the wife of Signor Collizoli-Sega, and is described as possessing a "sweet and gentle temperament, with special love of silence and quiet. She centred her interests in her family, which she managed admirably."<sup>3</sup>

Still more distinguished in the annals of medicine was Maria delle Donne, who also studied in the University of Bologna, and "received the

<sup>1</sup> Fachini.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

doctoral laurel" in 1806.<sup>1</sup> She "constantly practised both Medicine and Surgery," and was appointed by Napoleon Bonaparte to the Chair of Midwifery at Bologna. The *Gazette Medicale*, quoting from the "*Raccoglitore Medico*," gives the following account of her:—"Anna Maria delle Donne, docteur en médecine, auteur d'élégants vers latins, professeur d'obstétrique, à l'Université de Bologna, membre de l'Académie, bénédictine, &c., est décédée le 9 Janvier, 1842. Cette femme distinguée qui a succédé à Madame Mazzolini et à Madame Bassi, est une des gloires scientifiques de Bologna. Elle soutint en 1800, avec un très grand succès, une thèse de Philosophie, de Chirurgie, and de Medicine. Peu après, à la suite d'un examen public, on lui conféra le grade de docteur et de consultant. Napoleon en passant à Bologne fut frappé du savoir de cette dame, et institua pour elle une Chaire d'Obstétrique, où elle se fit une grande renommée."<sup>2</sup>

Nor was Italy alone noted as the birthplace of women skilled in Medicine. In Germany, early in this century, Frau von Siebold so greatly distinguished herself in the practice of midwifery that the degree of M.D. was conferred on her by the University of Giessen;<sup>3</sup> and her daughter

<sup>1</sup> Fachini.

<sup>2</sup> "*Gazette Medicale*," du 10 Janvier 1846.

<sup>3</sup> Klemm, "*Die Frauen*."

Marianne, afterwards Frau von Heidenreich, studied in the Universities of both Göttingen and Giessen, and took her degree in the regular way in 1817. She is spoken of as "one of the most famed and eminent female scholars of Germany," and as being "universally honoured as one of the first living authorities in her special branch of science."<sup>1</sup> She died only in 1859.

In France, the name of Madame Lachapelle<sup>2</sup> was known and honoured as that of one of the ablest teachers of Midwifery during the latter part of the last century. She has left several valuable works on subjects connected with her specialty. Her funeral in 1821 was followed by all the chief physicians of Paris. Her pupil and successor, Madame Boivin,<sup>3</sup> was still more distinguished for her medical knowledge and skill, and for her contributions to anatomical science. Her "*Mémoire de l'art des Accouchements*" was approved by the highest medical authority, and was appointed as the text-book for students and midwives by the Minister of the Interior. She was invested with an Order of Merit by the King of Prussia in 1814, and in the same year was appointed co-director (with the Marquis de Belloy) of the General Hospital for Seine and Oise, and

<sup>1</sup> *Athenæum*, July 1859.

<sup>2</sup> Arnault's "*Biographie nouvelle des contemporains*."

<sup>3</sup> Quérard's "*Littérature Française*."

in 1815 was entrusted with the direction of a temporary Military Hospital, for her services in which latter capacity she received a public vote of thanks. She was also entrusted with the direction of the Hospice de la Maternité, and of the Maison Royale de Santé, and was one of the most distinguished practitioners of the time. She made original discoveries in Anatomy, invented various surgical instruments, and obtained prizes for medical theses from the Société de Medicine.

Her medical writings were distinguished by "precision et clarté, jugement sain, erudition choisie, et savoir solide." In 1846 one of her books was eulogized by Jourdan as "ouvrage éminemment pratique, et le meilleur que nous possédions encore sur ce sujet," with the additional remark that "tout se réunit pour lui mériter une des premières places parmi les productions de la littérature médicale moderne." She was a member of the Medical Societies of Paris, Bordeaux, Berlin, Brussels, and Bruges, and was honoured with the degree of M.D. from the University of Marbourg. She died in 1841.

These numerous instances of the successful practice of Medicine by women seem to have been little known, or else forgotten, to judge by the surprise expressed when, after surmounting many difficulties, an English lady, named Elizabeth

Blackwell, succeeded in obtaining medical education and the degree of M.D. from a medical school in America in 1849. The novelty, in truth, was not in the granting of the medical degree to a woman, but in its being received by an English-woman, for it is hardly gratifying to one's national pride to find that England never has accorded such encouragement to female learning as was found in Italy, Germany, and France ; and it is still more painful to realize that this country, almost alone, stands still aloof from the movement of liberal wisdom that has now in all these lands, as well as in Switzerland, and even in Russia, granted to woman the advantage of University education and degrees. English women are not behind others in desiring knowledge, but as yet they are forced to seek it on foreign shores, for hitherto no British University has ever fully admitted women to its educational advantages ; and a few years ago, that of London, with all its professions of liberality, refused a woman's petition even for examination for the degree of M.D.!

So much for the historical evidence bearing on this question. I am indeed sorry to have paused so long on this part of the subject, but it seemed essential to a proper statement of the whole case.

If, then, nature does not instinctively forbid the practice of the healing art by women, and if it cannot be denied that some at least of its



branches have long been in their hands, we must go further to seek on what grounds their admission to the medical profession should be opposed.

Probably the next argument will be that women do not require, and are not fitted to receive, the scientific education needful for a first-rate Physician, and that "for their own sakes" it is not desirable that they should pursue some of the studies indispensably necessary. To this the answer must be, that the wisest thinkers teach us to believe that each human being must be "a law unto himself," and must decide what is and what is not suitable for his needs, what will and what will not contribute to his own development, and fit him best to fulfil the life-work most congenial to his tastes. If women claim that they do need and can appreciate instruction in any or all sciences, I do not know who has the right to deny the assertion.

That this controversy is no new one may be proved by reference to a very curious black-letter volume now in the British Museum,<sup>1</sup> wherein the writer protests, "I mervayle gretely of the opynyon of some men that say they wolde not in no wyse that theyr doughters or wyves or kynneswomen sholde lerne scyences, and that it sholde apayre their cōdycyons. This thing is not

<sup>1</sup> "The Boke of the Cyte of Ladyes," by Christine Du Castel, 1521.



to say ne to sustayne. That the woman apayreth by connynge it is not well to beleve. As the proverbe sayeth, 'that nature gyveth maye not be taken away.'"

If it be argued that the study of Natural Science may injure a woman's character, I would answer, in the words of one of the purest-minded women I know, that "if a woman's womanliness is not deep enough in her nature to bear the brunt of any needful education, it is not worth guarding." It is, I think, inconceivable that any one who considers the study of natural science to be but another word for earnest and reverent inquiry into the works of God, and who believes that, in David's words, these are to be "sought out of all them that have pleasure therein," can imagine that any such study can be otherwise than elevating and helpful to the moral, as well to the mental nature of every student who pursues it in a right spirit. In the words of Scripture, "To the pure, all things are pure," and in the phrase of chivalry, "Honi soit qui mal y pense."

It has always struck me as a curious inconsistency, that while almost everybody applauds and respects Miss Nightingale and her followers for their brave disregard of conventionalities on behalf of suffering humanity, and while hardly any one would pretend that there was any want of femi-

nine delicacy in their going among the foulest sights and most painful scenes, to succour, not their own sex, but the other, many people yet profess to be shocked when other women desire to fit themselves to take the medical care of those of their sisters who would gladly welcome their aid. Where is the real difference? If a woman is to be applauded for facing the horrors of an army hospital when she believes that she can there do good work, why is she to be condemned as indelicate when she professes her willingness to go through an ordeal, certainly no greater, to obtain the education necessary for a medical practitioner? Surely work is in no way degraded by being made scientific; it cannot be commendable to obey instructions as a nurse when it would be unseemly to learn the reasons for them as a student, or to give them as a doctor; more especially as the nurse's duties may lead her, as they did in the Crimea, to attend on men with injuries and diseases of all kinds, whereas the woman who practises as a physician would confine her practice to women only. It is indeed hard to see any reason of delicacy, at least, which can be adduced in favour of women as nurses, and against them as physicians.

Their natural capacity for the one sphere or the other is, of course, a wholly different matter, and is, indeed, a thing not to be argued about,

but to be tested.<sup>1</sup> If women fail to pass the required examinations for the ordinary medical degree, or if, after their entrance into practice, they fail to succeed in it, the whole question is naturally and finally disposed of. But that is not the point now at issue.

That the most thorough and scientific medical education need do no injury to any woman might safely be prophesied, even if the experiment had never been tried; but we have, moreover, the absolute confirmation of experience on the point, as I, for one, will gladly testify from personal acquaintance in America with many women who have made Medicine their profession; having had myself the advantage of studying under one who was characterized, by a medical gentleman known throughout the professional world, as “one of the best physicians in Boston,” and who, certainly, was more remarkable for thorough refinement of mind than most women I know,—Dr Lucy Sewall.

Of course there may always be unfortunate exceptions, or rather there will always be those of both sexes who, whatever their profession may be, will be sure to disgrace it; but it is not of them that I speak, nor is it by such individual cases that the supporters of any great movement should be judged.

The next argument usually advanced against

<sup>1</sup> See *Note B.*

the practice of medicine by women is that there is no demand for it ; that women, as a rule, have little confidence in their own sex, and had rather be attended by a man. That everybody had rather be attended by a competent physician is no doubt true ; that women have hitherto had little experience of competent physicians of their own sex is equally true ; nor can it be denied that the education bestowed on most women is not one likely to inspire much confidence. It is probably a fact, that until lately there has been “no demand” for women doctors, because it does not occur to most people to demand what does not exist ; but that very many women have wished that they could be medically attended by those of their own sex I am very sure, and I know of more than one case where ladies have habitually gone through one confinement after another without proper attendance, because the idea of employing a man was so extremely repugnant to them. I have indeed repeatedly found that even doctors, not altogether favourable to the present movement, allow that they consider men rather out of place in midwifery practice ;<sup>1</sup> and an eminent

<sup>1</sup> “There is one subject in which I have long felt a deep, and deepening concern. I refer to *man-midwifery*. . . . Nature tells us with her own voice what is fitting in these cases ; and nothing but the omnipotence of custom, or the urgent cry of peril, terror, and agony—what Luther calls *miserrima miseria*—would make her ask for the presence of a man on such an occasion, when she

American practitioner once remarked to me that he never entered a lady's room to attend her in confinement without wishing to apologize for what he felt to be an intrusion, though a necessary and beneficent intrusion, in one of his sex.

I suppose that the real test of "demand" is not in the opinions expressed by those women who have never even seen a thoroughly educated female physician, but in the practice which flows in to any such physician when her qualifications are clearly satisfactory. In England there are at present but two women legally qualified to practise Medicine, and I understand that already their time is much more fully occupied, and their receipts much greater, than is usually the case with medical men who have been practising for so short a period. Dr Garrett Anderson's Dispensary for poor women is also largely attended, and during the five years which have elapsed since it was opened, more than 40,000 visits have been made to it; 9000 new patients have

bides herself and is in travail. And, as in all such cases, the evil reacts on the men as a special class, and on the profession itself." — "*Locke and Sydenham*," by Dr JOHN BROWN.

"Nothing probably but the deadening force of habit, combined with the apparent necessity of the case, has induced us to endure that anomalous person against whose existence our language itself bears a perpetual protest—the man-midwife. And this single instance suggests a whole class of others in which the intervention of a man is scarcely less inappropriate."—*Guardian*, Nov. 3, 1869.

been admitted, and 250 midwifery cases have been attended by the midwives attached to the charity, Dr Garrett Anderson being called in when necessary.

When we turn to America, we find that a considerable number of women have very extensive practice and large professional incomes (more, indeed, than in some cases seems warranted by their medical qualifications). The Report of a little hospital, managed entirely by women, in Boston, U.S., relates that during 1867 the number of in-patients was 198; of persons visited at their homes, 281; and of those able to attend at the dispensary, 4,576; all these patients being women and children only. In fact, the attendance at the Dispensary became so excessive in proportion to the resources of the charity, that in 1868 a rule was passed by the Committee requiring each patient to pay twenty-five cents (or about ninepence) for medicines, at each visit, except when she brought "a certificate of her poverty, properly authenticated." This regulation brought out still more strongly the distinct *choice* of poor women in this matter, for, though the General City Dispensary gave medicines gratuitously, the number of those who attended at the Woman's Hospital was much less diminished than was expected, being still 3,236 in 1868. In New York also, where the Dispensary managed by women doctors is but one of many,

the crowd of patients is very great, the numbers being, in 1867, no less than 6354, while 545 persons were attended at their homes either in confinement or during severe illness. Of course it will be understood that each patient thus entered on the books implies not one visit, but many, paid to the Dispensary, or often repeated attendance at the patient's home.

Of the Boston Hospital for Women and Children I can speak from lengthened experience in it as a student. When standing in its dispensary I have over and over again heard rough women of a very poor class say, when questioned why they had not had earlier treatment for certain diseases, "Oh, I *could not* go to a man with such a trouble, and I did not know till just now that ladies did this work;" and from others have repeatedly heard different expressions of the feeling that, "It's so nice, isn't it, to be able at last to ask ladies about such things?"

As I am alluding to my own experience in this matter, I may perhaps be allowed to say how often in the same place I have been struck with the *contingent* advantages attendant on the medical care by women of women. How often I have seen cases connected with stories of shame or sorrow to which a woman's hand could far most fittingly minister, and where sisterly help and counsel could give far more appropriate succour than could



be expected from the average young medical man, however good his intentions. Perhaps we shall find the solution of some of our saddest social problems when educated and pure-minded women are brought more constantly in contact with their sinning and suffering sisters, in other relations as well as those of missionary effort.

So far from there being no demand for women as physicians, I believe that there is at this moment a large amount of work actually awaiting them; that a large amount of suffering exists among women which never comes under the notice of medical men at all, and which will remain unmitigated till women are ready in sufficient numbers to attend medically to those of their own sex who need them, and this in all parts of the world. From India we hear urgent demands for "educating native women of good caste, so as to qualify them to treat female patients and children."<sup>1</sup> We are informed that "this is a work which can only be carried on by women, as the native women in many cases will rather die than be seen by a man in times of sickness,"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Delhi Gazette*, 1866.

<sup>2</sup> "In many parts of India—I think I may say most parts—native ladies are entirely shut out from any medical assistance, however great may be their need, because no man who is not one of the family can enter their apartments or see them; and though thousands thus die from neglect and want of timely help, yet nothing can be done to assist them until we have ladies willing and able to act in a medical capacity."—*The Queen*, June 8, 1872.



and arrangements have already been made for a systematic "Female Medical Mission," though perhaps the standard of medical knowledge required can, under existing circumstances, hardly be fixed as high as is desirable. To show, however, the eagerness with which the native women avail themselves of the aid thus offered, I may mention that when a lady (who had had some medical training, but possessed no degree,) was sent out by the Society<sup>1</sup> in December 1870, she, during the first three months of her stay, had occasion to pay no less than 313 professional visits to zenanas, and to treat 158 patients at her dispensary, which was arranged with a view to affording them the utmost privacy. Subsequently her visits to zenanas averaged as many as seventeen a day, while nearly twice as many patients came to her dispensary. Efforts are also being made to train native Hindoo women for some branches, at least, of the medical profession. Dr Corbyn of Bareilly, in 1870, wrote as follows:—"I am educating a number of native girls, and three have already passed as native doctors. They are of all castes,—Christians, Mahommedans, and Hindoos. My school is divided into three classes. The first-class pupils can read and write English and Urdee with accuracy. They are taught medicine, surgery, midwifery, diseases of women and chil-

<sup>1</sup> *Treasurer*, T. B. WINTER, Esq., 28 Montpelier Road, Brighton.

dren (especially the latter two). The second-class learn anatomy, materia medica, and physiology, in English and Urdee. The pupils of the other (preparatory) class are taught English and Urdee. We have a female ward attached to the dispensary for women and children, and these girls entirely attend to them, under my and the sub-assistants' supervision. It is wonderful how they can manipulate ; they have plenty of nerve."<sup>1</sup> Even more recently we learn that "the Mahommedan Nawab of Rampoor has presented to the Bareilly mission a large building for the purpose of a medical school for women. Several women are now going through a scientific course of instruction."<sup>2</sup>

About eight or ten years ago, "several of the wild tribes of Russian Asia petitioned the Government to send them out properly qualified women to act as midwives. Their petition was granted, the Government undertaking all the expense of the education and maintenance of a certain number of women for this purpose. After a time one of these tribes, the Kirgesen, petitioned further, that the women thus sent to them should also be taught some branches of the art of Medicine. One of the women, then being trained as a midwife, hearing of this petition, wrote to the Kirgesen, proposing that she should study Medicine thoroughly, and go out to them as a qualified doctor.

<sup>1</sup> *Scotsman*, Oct. 26, 1870.    <sup>2</sup> *Brit. Med. Journal*, May 25, 1872.

She suggested at the same time that they should try to get permission for her to enter the Academy of St Petersburg as a regular medical student. The Kirgesen welcomed the proposal, and, through an influential Russian general, obtained an official document, empowering their future doctor to attend the Academy as a student. They have regularly sent money for her education and maintenance, and from the first have taken the greatest interest in her progress and welfare, requiring, among other things, periodical bulletins of her health. Hearing last summer that she was not well, they sent money for her to go abroad for her holiday, and asked for an extra bulletin.”<sup>1</sup>

I cite the above facts to show that the demand for female physicians is no artificial or imaginary one, and that it does not spring out of any fanciful whim of an over-refined social state ; but lest it should be supposed on the other hand to be confined to half-barbarous nations, I may quote the opinions expressed on this subject two years ago in one of the most thoughtful of our English journals : “ We heartily admit that the only way to discriminate clearly what practical careers women are, and are not, fitted for, is to let them try. In many cases, as in the medical profession, we do not feel any doubt that they will find a special kind of work for which they are specially

<sup>1</sup> *Macmillan's Magazine*, September 1868.

fitted, which has never been adequately done by men at all, and which never would be done but by women. . . . We have heard the opinion of one of the most eminent of our living physicians, that one of the new lady physicians is doing, in the most admirable manner, a work which medical men would never even have had the chance of doing.”<sup>1</sup>

I am told by Catholic friends that a great many cases of special disease remain untreated in convents, because the nuns, with their extreme notions of feminine seclusion, think that it would be little short of profanation to submit to some kinds of medical treatment from a man.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, it is expressly laid down by a great Catholic authority, St Alphonsus,<sup>3</sup> that though monks and nuns are required to place themselves in the doctor's care when commanded to do so by their superiors, a special exception is to be made in the case of nuns suffering from certain maladies, who can only be required to accept treatment from a skilled woman, if any such be available ; as, under existing circumstances, is so rarely the case. I do not ask any reader to applaud or even justify these poor nuns, if they, esteeming themselves “ the martyrs of holy purity,” sacrifice life to such scruples ; but I do most emphatically ask, in the

<sup>1</sup> *Spectator*, April 13, 1867.

<sup>2</sup> See *Note C*.

<sup>3</sup> “ *Theologia Moralis*,” by St Alphonsus.

name of humanity, whether the state of things can be defended which may drive women, from the highest and most holy motives, to submit to the extremity of physical suffering and even death itself, because it is impossible for them to obtain the medical services of their own sex, and because they believe they can best fulfil the spirit of their vows by accepting no other ?

I am informed by a friend that Archbishop Manning, when expressing to her his strong interest in the question of the medical education of women, alluded to facts like those referred to above, as affording one of the strongest motives for such interest in the minds of Catholics. Nor, surely, need sympathy in such a case be limited within the bounds of any religious denomination.

To pass to the consideration of other cases of a less exceptional kind, there can, I think, be little doubt that an enormous amount of preventible suffering arises from the unwillingness of very many girls on the verge of womanhood to consult a medical man on various points which are yet of vital importance, and to appeal to him in cases of apparently slight illness, which yet issue but too often in ultimately confirmed ill-health. I firmly believe that if a dozen competent women entered upon medical practice at this moment in different parts of England, they might, without withdrawing a single patient from her present medical at-

tendant, find full and remunerative employment in attending simply to those cases which, in the present state of things, go without any adequate treatment whatever ; for I believe that many suffering women would be willing to consult one of their own sex, if thoroughly qualified, when they refuse, except at some crisis of acute suffering, to call in a medical man.<sup>1</sup> Probably Queen Isabella of Castile<sup>2</sup> was neither the first nor the last woman whose life was sacrificed to her modesty. Even if such extreme instances are rare, I think it cannot be denied that very much needless pain, “and pain of a kind that ought not to be inflicted,” is caused, especially to young girls, by the necessity of consulting men on all occasions, and I believe that those who know most of the facts insist most strongly on this point.

<sup>1</sup> A curious coincidence recently occurred which may illustrate this feeling. Not long ago I was attacked in the newspapers for having alluded to this subject, and a certain doctor published three letters in one week to prove that “ninety-nine out of every hundred Englishwomen suffering from female diseases freely consulted medical men.” During that very week no less than three women, in different classes of society, appealed to me for advice and treatment for sufferings about which they “did not like to ask a gentleman.” In each case I advised them to consult a medical man, as I was not yet myself in practice, and there were no women doctors in Edinburgh ; but in each case I found that their feeling in the matter was too strong to allow them to do so.

<sup>2</sup> “Concerning her death, it was magnanimous and answerable to the courage of heroes,” &c.—*Gallerie of Heroick Women*, written in French by Pierre le Moyne, and translated by the Marquess of Winchester, 1652.



I do not know how far the Medical Profession would acknowledge the truth of the above statement; it is probable that they are really less competent to judge about it than women are themselves, for, as an eminent divine remarked that it was considered a point of politeness not to express theological doubts before a clergyman, it may probably be thought still more obligatory not to question the adequacy of the existing medical profession before one of its members. One can hardly imagine a lady sending for a doctor to tell him why she will *not* consult him; it is sufficient to know that many cases of disease among women go without treatment; it is surely open to any one at least to suggest the above as one of the possible reasons.

And indeed, if no such special suffering were often involved in the idea of consulting a man on all points, it seems self-evident that a woman's most natural adviser would be one of her own sex, who must surely be most able to understand and sympathise with her in times of sickness as well as of health, and who can often far more fully appreciate her state, both of mind and body, than any medical man would be likely to do.<sup>1</sup>

Nor can I leave the subject without expressing a hope that, when women are once practising medi-

<sup>1</sup> See *Note D.*

cine in large numbers, great gain may accrue to medical science from the observations and discoveries which their sex will give them double facilities of making among other women. One of the most eminent of the so-called "ladies' doctors" of the day writes :—"The principal reason why the knowledge of diseases of women has so little advanced, is the hitherto undisturbed belief that one sex only is qualified by education and powers of mind to investigate and to cure what the other sex alone has to suffer." After alluding to women physicians of both ancient and modern times, Dr Tilt further remarks, that, "if well educated, they may greatly improve our knowledge of the diseases of women."<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, there is reason to hope that women doctors may do even more for the health of their own sex in the way of prevention than of cure, and surely this is the very noblest province of the true physician. Already it is being proved with what eagerness women will attend lectures on physiology and hygiene when delivered to them by a woman, though perhaps not one in ten would go to the same course of lectures if given by a medical man. I look forward to the day when a competent knowledge of these subjects shall be as general among women as it now is rare ; and when that day arrives, I trust that the "poor

<sup>1</sup> "*Handbook of Uterine Therapeutics*," by Edward John Tilt, M.D.



health" which is now so sadly common in our sex, and which so frequently comes from sheer ignorance of sanitary laws, will become rather the exception than, as now too often, the rule. I hope that then we shall find far fewer instances of life-long illness entailed on herself by a girl's thoughtless ignorance ; I believe we shall see a generation of women far fitter in mind and body to take their share in the work of the world, and that the Registrar will have to record a much lower rate of infantile mortality when mothers themselves have learned to know something at least of the elementary laws of health. It has been well said that the noblest end of education is to make the educator no longer necessary ; and I, at least, shall think it the highest proof of success if women doctors can in time succeed in so raising the standard of health among their sister women, that but half the present percentage of medical practitioners are required in comparison to the female population.

Of course I do not expect that every reader will look at this question from my point of view, or will be able to arrive at the same conclusions respecting it. But I think that many who have never before seen the matter in the light in which I have tried to place it, will be ready to admit that there are at any rate *primâ facie* grounds for my argument, and that allowing even for considerable over-statement on my part, there

may still remain subject for serious consideration.

Even if I am wholly mistaken, and if all that needs doing *can* in England be effectually done by men, we have still, I think, no reason for the exclusion of women from the medical profession ; —there is still no ground on which it can be right to refuse to every patient the power of election between a physician of her own sex and of the other, when women as well as men are desirous of qualifying themselves for this work, seeing that it will after all be always a matter of choice ; for we cannot suppose that the time will ever come when women will be arbitrarily prevented from employing men, as they now are arbitrarily prevented from employing women, as their medical attendants.

The assertion that women *are* at present “arbitrarily prevented from employing women as their medical attendants” may sound startling, but it is at this moment practically true in England, in the most literal sense. Since medical practice has, for the protection of the public, been made a matter of legislation, it has been absolutely illegal for any physician or surgeon to practise as such in this country, unless registered by the appointed Medical Board, and that Board is not obliged to register any one who has not a British medical degree. It is evident, then, that to deny all British medical degrees to

women,—not only to refuse them instruction, but to refuse to examine them if they have acquired knowledge elsewhere,—is most arbitrarily to prohibit all women, whatever their qualification, from practising medicine in the United Kingdom, except under legal pains and penalties.

Of course no such arbitrary action was even contemplated when the Act of 1858 was passed; and I think that when once the great practical injustice of the present state of things is fully understood by the public, a change is inevitable,—either British medical degrees will be thrown open to women, as is most desirable, or the legal conditions of practice will be modified to meet the case of those to whom such degrees are denied. It is perhaps hardly to be expected, though very much to be desired, that medical men as a body should themselves take the initiative in this matter, and throw open the doors to all women who desire worthily to join their fellowship, for it proverbially “needs *very* good men to give up their own monopoly;” but the action of the general public in the matter can hardly be doubtful except as a question of time;—no English court could be expected to condemn to legal penalties a succession of highly-educated ladies who may have seized, often with great effort, every opportunity open to them to fit

themselves thoroughly for a work which they believe to be especially their own.

The recent action taken in the matter by the authorities at Apothecaries' Hall is exactly of the kind to outrage an Englishman's sense of fairness, and therefore is sure before long to bring its own redress. As the facts may not be thoroughly understood in the non-medical world, I will briefly recapitulate them. When Miss Garrett first began to study medicine in 1860; she tried to obtain admittance to one School and University after another, and finally found that Apothecaries' Hall was the only body which, from its charter, had no power to refuse to examine any candidate complying with its conditions. She accordingly went through the required five years' apprenticeship, and obtained her diploma in 1865, having gone to very great additional expense in obtaining privately the required lectures by recognised Professors,—sometimes paying fifty guineas for a course when the usual fee, in the classes from which she was debarred, was but three or four. Not content, however, with indirectly imposing this enormous pecuniary tax on women, the authorities now bethought them to pass a rule forbidding students to receive any part of their medical education privately,—this course being publicly advised by one of the leading medical journals as a safe way of evading the obligations of the charter,

and yet effectually shutting out the one chance left to the women!<sup>1</sup>

Of course the efficacy of this measure ceases the moment that any regular medical school fairly opens its doors to women ; but till that day comes, it presents a formidable, if not insuperable, difficulty. Commenting on this proceeding, the *Daily News* remarks :—" We recommend these facts to the good people who think that coercion, restriction, and the tyranny of combination, are peculiar to any one class of society. It will be a great day in England when the right of every individual to make the most of the ability which God has given him, free from interested interference, is recognised, and to that goal we are surely advancing ; but our progress is slow, and it is very clear that it is not only in the lower ranks of the community that the obstructive trades-union spirit is energetically operating."

While such is the state of affairs in England, other European nations have taken a very different position. We have already seen that the Italian Universities were, in fact, never closed to women, and that at Bologna no less than three women held Professors' chairs in the Medical Faculty.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Note E*.

<sup>2</sup> Besides these we have, at Bologna,—Maddalena Buonsignori, Professor of Laws, 1380 ; Laura Bassi, Professor of Philosophy, 1733 ; Maria Gaetana Agnesi, Professor of Mathematics, 1750 ; Clothilde Tambroni, Professor of Greek, 1794 ; and also other instances in various Italian Universities.

We have several instances of degrees granted to women in the Middle Ages by the Universities of Bologna, Padua, Milan, Pavia, and others; the earliest instance that I have found being that of Betisia Gozzadini,<sup>1</sup> who was made Doctor of Laws by the University of Bologna in 1209. In Germany also several such instances have occurred. At Paris no less than seven degrees in Arts and Sciences have been granted to women by the University of France within the last ten years, and a number of women are now studying in the Medical School there. In answer to my enquiries in 1868, the Secretary to the Minister of Public Instruction made the following communication:—

*“ Paris, le 18 Août 1868,*

*“ Ministère de l'Instruction Publique.*

“ *MADemoisELLE*,—En réponse à la lettre que vous me faites l'honneur de m'adresser, en vous recommandant du nom de Lord Lyons, qui a écrit pour vous à Mons. le Ministre, je m'empresse de vous faire savoir que le Ministre est disposé à vous autoriser, aussi que les autres dames Anglaises qui se destinaient à la médecine, à faire vos études à la Faculté de Paris, et à y subir des examens.

“ It est bien entendu que vous devez être munie, par voie d'équivalence ou autrement, des diplômes exigés pour l'inscription à la faculté de médecine.

“ Agreez, Mademoiselle l'assurance de mon respect,

(Signed) “ *DANTON.*”

Since this Essay was first published, two women have obtained the degree of M.D. in Paris, after

<sup>1</sup> Ghirardacci, “*Historia Bologna*,” Bologna, 1605.

passing brilliant examinations in each case. The first graduate was our distinguished country-woman, Miss Garrett, who, after passing the five examinations required, received her degree in June 1870. The *Lancet* records that "her friends must have been highly gratified to hear how her judges congratulated her on her success, and to see what sympathy and respect was shown to her by all present."<sup>1</sup>

The next lady who graduated was Miss Mary C. Putnam of New York, who, after quietly pursuing her studies (combined with original researches), like a second Archimedes, during both the sieges of Paris in 1870-71, took her degree with great honour in August 1871. The *Lancet*<sup>2</sup> remarked—"Miss Putnam has just been undergoing the very strict examinations for the doctor's degree in Paris, and has passed very creditably. This is the second case in the Paris faculty, the innovation being made quietly, whilst elsewhere angry discussions intervene."

At Lyons, also, two women have obtained degrees in Arts, in 1861 and 1869 respectively. At Montpellier a degree in Arts was also conferred on a woman in 1865, and another lady has passed the first two examinations in the *Ecole de Pharmacie Supérieure* in that city.

For several years past the University of Zurich

<sup>1</sup> *Lancet*, June 18, 1870.

<sup>2</sup> *Lancet*, August 26, 1871.



has been thrown open to women as freely as to men ; a Russian woman, named Nadejda Suslowa, being the first to obtain a degree in Medicine, in 1867. Several more have since then graduated, and others are at present pursuing their studies there in the ordinary classes.<sup>1</sup>

In March 1870 it was announced, on the authority of the *Lancet*, that the University of Vienna had formally decided to admit women as students, and to confer on them the ordinary medical degrees.<sup>2</sup>

A month or two later the Swedish newspapers published in their official columns a royal decree, granting to Swedish women the right to study and practise medicine, and ordaining that the professors of the Universities should make arrangements for teaching and examining them in the usual way.<sup>3</sup>

Even Russia seems in advance of England in this matter. In 1869, "the Medico-Chirurgical Academy of St Petersburg conferred the degree of M.D. upon Madame Kaschewarow, the first female candidate for this honour. When her name was mentioned by the Dean, it was received with an immense storm of applause, which lasted for several minutes. The ceremony of investing

<sup>1</sup> See *Note F*.

<sup>2</sup> *Scotsman*, March 22, 1870.

<sup>3</sup> *Pall Mall Gazette*, August 1870.



her with the insignia of her dignity being over, her fellow-students and colleagues lifted her upon a chair, and carried her with triumphant shouts through the hall.”<sup>1</sup>

At Moscow, also, “the Faculty of Medicine, with the full concurrence of the Council of the University of Moscow, have decided to grant to women the right of being present at the educational courses and lectures of the Faculty, and to follow all the labours of the Medico-Chirurgical Academy. The tests of capacity will be precisely the same as for male students.”<sup>2</sup> Still more recently we hear from St Petersburg that “the success of the lady physicians is encouraging other ladies to devote themselves to medicine, and a considerable step has been made in this direction.

. . . A person who interests herself in the higher education of women has requested the Minister of State to accept the sum of £8000, and to devote it to the establishment of medical classes for women at the Imperial Academy of Medicine.”<sup>3</sup>

Nor is the progress of liberality less marked on the other side of the Atlantic. It is well known that several of the smaller medical schools in the United States admitted women as soon as they

<sup>1</sup> *Medical Gazette*, New York, February 27, 1869.

<sup>2</sup> *British Medical Journal*, October 1871.

<sup>3</sup> *British Medical Journal*, May 18, 1872.

applied for instruction, but until 1869 no American University threw open its doors. About the end of that year, however, the State University of Michigan took the initiative in this matter, and the following statement was inserted in last year's official Calendar:—"Recognising the equality of rights of both sexes to the highest educational advantages, the Board of Regents have made provision for the medical education of women, by authorising a course of education for them, separate, but in all respects equal to that heretofore given to men only. The conditions of admission, as well as graduation, are the same for all." During the first year fourteen women appeared as students in the Faculty of Arts, three in that of Law, and thirteen were studying Medicine and Surgery. In the spring of 1871 Miss Sanford received the first medical degree granted to a woman by an American University; and it is worth notice that this lady (herself a pupil of Dr Lucy Sewall of Boston,) took her place among the most distinguished graduates of the year;—her thesis on "Puerperal Eclampsia" being the one selected by the Medical Faculty for publication. The number of women studying at Michigan University during the session 1871-72 was sixty-eight, as compared with the thirty of the previous year; such rapid increase being tolerably significant of the avidity with which women embrace

the long-denied opportunities of instruction, and offering sufficient encouragement to any British University that may resolve to try the same experiment.

It will thus be seen that many nations have, from the earliest period, recognised and acted upon the truth that "Mind is of no sex," and that, where this has not been the case in former times, the barriers are being rapidly and readily thrown down as civilization advances, till, in truth, Great Britain now stands almost alone in refusing to admit her daughters to the national universities, and in denying them the opportunity of proving experimentally whether "the male mind of the Caucasian race<sup>1</sup>" is indeed so immeasurably superior to its feminine counterpart. It may be remarked, by the bye, that it is very curious to notice how the very people who loudly maintain the existence of this vast mental disparity are just those who strenuously resist every endeavour to submit their theory to the touchstone of experience, instead of welcoming the application of those tests that might be expected so triumphantly to prove their point! But, jesting apart, the present state of things can hardly be agreeable

<sup>1</sup> For a *reductio ad absurdum* of the whole question, let me refer to Dr Henry Bennet's letter, containing the above words, in the *Lancet* of June 18, 1870. An answer to it occurs in the *Lancet* of July 9, 1870, and is referred to in *Note B*.

to English self-respect ; and it is to be hoped that our country will soon descend from her bad eminence, and no longer be marked out as the one land where men only can reap benefit from the educational advantages provided at the expense of the nation at large. It can hardly be an object of ambition to the learned men of any people to deserve the woe pronounced of old against those who " have taken away the key of knowledge, and them that were entering in, they hindered."

There seems to be practically no doubt now that women are and will be doctors. The only question really remaining is, how thoroughly they are to be educated and fitted to take their share of responsibility in the care of the life and health of the nation ; how far their difficulties are to be lightened or increased ; and whether the state of things shall continue by which they are driven into unwilling quackery on the one hand, or made to suffer real oppression from irresponsible authority on the other.

Men who, after an irregular education and incomplete training, claim the name of physicians, are justly stigmatised as quacks, and excluded from honourable fellowship, for they have refused the straight and direct path as too laborious, and have sought admittance by crooked ways. It is right enough to impose heavy penalties on them for practising without a diploma which it needs

only industry on their part to obtain ; but what shall we say when women are refused admission to every regular Medical School, and then, when they have perhaps painfully and laboriously gathered their own education, either in England or abroad, are excluded from the fellowship of the profession, for the sin of having been unjustly treated ! That some women have succeeded in acquiring most competent medical knowledge and skill can hardly be denied, except by those who really know nothing of the facts, or are wilfully blind to them ; but in almost every case they have done so at a cost of money, effort, and personal sacrifice, that can be expected only from the few. Imagine all medical students met by the difficulties which female students must encounter ; —how many properly educated doctors should we have ?

Many persons, however, who would gladly see women engage in the practice of Medicine, yet think it undesirable that they should obtain their education in the same schools as men ; and here another practical point arises for consideration. If it is indeed true that no one is fit for the profession of Medicine unless able to banish from its practice the personal idea of sex, it certainly seems as if all earnest students seeking the same knowledge for the same ends, ought to be able to pursue their studies together. We are constantly

told (and I think rightly) that no woman *need* object, when necessary, to consult a medical man on any point, because the physician will see in it simply an impersonal "case," and will, from his scientific standpoint, practically ignore all that would be embarrassing as between persons of opposite sexes. If this is and ought to be true, it does not seem too much to demand equal delicacy of feeling among those who will in a year or two be themselves physicians; and, from personal experience when studying in large American hospitals with students of both sexes, I believe that no serious difficulty need ever occur, except in cases of really exceptional coarseness of character on one side or the other. That such joint study will be for the first few days novel and embarrassing is of course natural; but I believe that, as the first novelty wears off, the embarrassment too will disappear in the interest of a common study, and that no thoroughly pure-minded woman, with an ordinary amount of tact, need ever fear such association with students of whom the majority will always be gentlemen. It is of course a radically different thing to study any or all subjects with earnest scientific interest, and to discuss them lightly in common conversation.<sup>1</sup>

Not only in America has the system of joint education been tried, but at Paris and at Zurich

<sup>1</sup> See *Note G.*

ladies are at the present moment studying in the regular Medical Schools, and friends at each place assure me of the complete success of the experiment, if such it is considered. Dr Mary Putnam (the first lady ever admitted to the Parisian Medical School) in 1869 wrote thus : "There is not the slightest restriction on my studies or my presence at the Classes. . . . I have never found the slightest difficulty in studying with the young men with whom I am associated, not only at lectures, but in the hospitals, reading-room, laboratory, &c. I have always been treated with a courtesy at once frank and respectful." A lady studying Medicine at the University of Michigan in 1870, wrote—"We are very much pleased with the way in which we have been received here, both by professors and students ; they have treated us in every respect with great courtesy." Another lady, when studying at Zurich, reported that "in the Medical School of Zurich, no advantage which is afforded to the male students is denied to the women. Every class is open to them, and they work side by side with the men. The students have invariably been to me most friendly, helpful, and courteous." In answer to an official letter of enquiry, the Dean of the Medical Faculty at Zurich wrote : "Since 1867, ladies have been regularly admitted as matriculated students, and have been allowed all the



privileges of *cives academici*. As far as our experience has gone, the new practice has not in any way been found to damage the interests of the University. The lady students we have hitherto had have all been found to behave with great good taste, and to be diligent students." Such evidence must surely carry more weight than the opinions of those who merely theorize about probabilities, especially when such theorists start, as is often the case, with a predisposition to find "lions in the way."

If the admission of women to the regular Medical Schools has been proved to bring no evil consequences, wherever teachers and professors have shown good will, it needs strong arguments to justify their exclusion from advantages which they can hardly obtain elsewhere; for it has been well remarked, that nothing can be more false than to confound a "small injustice" with "injustice to a small number."

It is simply a mockery, and one calculated to mislead the public, when a medical journal<sup>1</sup> announces that "We would offer no obstacle to any steps which women may think would be conducive to their own benefit. But if it be indispensable that they should study Anatomy and Medicine, let them, in the interests of common decency, have an educational institution and licensing body of

<sup>1</sup> *Medical Times and Gazette*, Feb. 23, 1867, and April 24, 1869.



their own." And again, "If women are determined to become Medical Practitioners, they are at perfect liberty to do so ; but it is only consistent with decency that they should have their own special Schools and examining bodies." Such writers know perfectly well that it is utterly impossible for two or three struggling women students to found "their own special Schools," (though, when a sufficient number of women are educated, they may gladly make such provision for those who will succeed them,) and that, if in truth women as well as men have a right to claim opportunities of education, the duty of providing separate instruction for them clearly falls on the existing Schools, if the authorities refuse to admit them to share in the general advantages offered.

For myself, I cannot see why difficulties that have in France and Switzerland been proved chimerical, should in England be supposed (without any fair trial) to be insurmountable ; as I, for one, cannot believe that less good and gentlemanly feeling should be expected from English and Scotch students, wherever their Professors set them an example of courtesy, than is found among the undergraduates of foreign Universities.

But this is a point which I do not greatly care to urge ; although Medical Science can undoubtedly be most favourably studied under those conditions which only large institutions can command,

and which could for many years be but imperfectly attained in a Medical College designed for women only. Still there is no doubt that women, thoroughly in earnest, and with a certain amount of means at their command, *can* obtain adequate medical instruction without entering any of the existing Schools for men, and no doubt arrangements could be made to secure all that is necessary with much less effort and expense than at present. We should be very thankful to have the Medical Schools thrown open to us, to be allowed some share in the noble provision made, chiefly with public money, for the instruction of medical students; but this is not absolutely indispensable; we may be refused this, and yet gain our end, though with greater toil and at greater expense. As time goes on, and as the number of women attracted by the study of Medicine increases, it will probably, apart from all extrinsic considerations, be both natural and convenient that they should have a Medical School of their own, in which every means of study should be specially provided for, and adapted to, their needs. It is not, however, I think, desirable that this should be done until the number of students is sufficient to guarantee funds for the liberal payment of first-rate teachers, and the ample provision of all needful facilities. If no women are to be made competent physicians till they have a

school of their own, there never will be any at all ; for those who broadly oppose the movement will always be able to say, " Women have never proved that they can use such advantages as will be thus furnished ; do not establish a College for them till they have."

So the double argument would run thus : " Do not found a Female Medical School till we are sure that women can successfully study Medicine ; do not let any woman study Medicine except in a Medical School of their own." Between such a Scylla and Charybdis who can steer clear ?

Supposing, however, that this dilemma were escaped, and that adequate means of instruction were provided, (with men, or apart from them, I care not,) it would still, I think, be essential, not only to the interests of women doctors, but to those of the public at large, that the standard for medical practitioners of both sexes should be identical ; that women should be admitted to the examinations already established for men, and should receive their medical degree on exactly the same terms. I do not for a moment desire to see degrees granted to women by a College of their own, or to see a special examination instituted for them ; for there would be extreme difficulty in measuring the exact value of any such diplomas, and danger would arise, on the one hand, of injustice being done to those thoroughly competent,

but possessing "only a woman's degree," and, on the other, of the standard being really lowered, and the medical degree coming to possess an uncertain and inferior value.

Of this latter danger we have abundant warning in America, where every fresh College is allowed the right of "graduating" its own students on whatever terms it pleases, and where, indeed, one is confounded by the innumerable diplomas granted by all sorts of Colleges to all sorts of people, so that one has need to inquire whether the M.D. attached to a name represents a degree granted by some "Eclectic" or "Hygeio-therapeutic" College of mushroom growth, or by the Universities of Harvard and Yale.

We cannot wish for such a state of things in England. Let British degrees continue to be of perfectly definite value; make the conditions as stringent as you please, but let them be such as are attainable by all students, and are clearly understood by the general public; and then, for all that would worthily win and wear the desired honours, "a fair field and no favour."

Is there not one of the English, Scotch, or Irish Universities that will win future laurels by now taking the lead generously, and announcing its willingness to cease, at least, its policy of arbitrary exclusion? Let the authorities, if they please, admit women to study in the ordinary classes

with or without any special restrictions (and it is hard to believe that at least the greater part of the lectures could not be attended in common); or let them, if they think needful, bid the women make their own arrangements, and gather their knowledge as they can;<sup>1</sup> with this promise only, that, when acquired, such knowledge shall be duly tested, and, if found worthy, shall receive the Hall-mark of the regular Medical Degree.

Surely this is not too much to ask, and no more is absolutely essential. If, indeed, the assertions so often made about the incapacity of women are true, the result of such examinations (which may be both theoretical and practical, scientific and clinical,) will triumphantly prove the point. If the examinations are left in the hands of competent men, we may be very sure that all unqualified women will be summarily rejected, as indeed it is to be desired that they should be.

<sup>1</sup> It would have been perfectly easy in Edinburgh, during 1871-72, to make complete arrangements for instruction, partly inside and partly outside the walls of the University, if only the authorities would have authorised the lady students to organize the necessary classes for themselves at their own expense. But the obstructive party took refuge behind the traditional *non-possumus*, and could not be driven from their position, though the Lord Advocate of Scotland gave a distinct opinion to the effect that any needful arrangements might legally be made, and though the more far-sighted Professors strongly deprecated such an abnegation of University power for the purpose of subserving a merely temporary object. In point of fact, the whole history of this struggle is one long illustration of the good old proverb,—“Where there’s a will, there’s a way.”

If, on the contrary, some women, however few, can, under all existing disadvantages, successfully pass the ordeal, and go forth with the full authority of the degree of Doctor of Medicine, surely all will be glad to welcome their perhaps unexpected success, and bid every such woman, as she sets forth on her mission of healing, a hearty God-speed!

---

II.

# Medical Education of Women,

THE SUBSTANCE OF A LECTURE

DELIVERED ON APRIL 26TH, 1872, IN ST GEORGE'S HALL, LONDON,  
THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF SHAFTESBURY IN THE CHAIR.

---

“ You misconceive the question like a man,  
Who sees a woman as the complement  
Of his sex merely. You forget too much  
That every creature, female as the male,  
Stands single in responsible act and thought,  
As also in birth and death.

——— I would rather take my part  
With God's Dead, who afford to walk in white,  
Yet spread His glory, than keep quiet here  
And gather up my feet from even a step  
For fear to soil my gown in so much dust.  
I choose to walk at all risks.”

“ *Aurora Leigh.*”





## MEDICAL EDUCATION OF WOMEN.

“ When free thoughts, like lightnings, are alive,  
And in each bosom of the multitude,  
Justice and Truth, with Custom's hydra brood,  
Wage silent war.”

STARTING, then, with the assumption that women may, with profit to themselves and to the community, become practitioners of medicine, it is clear that they must, in the first place, secure such an education as shall make them thoroughly competent to take their share of responsibility in the care of the national health; and, secondly, that they must obtain this education in accordance with the regulations prescribed by authority, so that they may be recognised by the State as having conformed to all its legal requirements, and may practise on terms of perfect equality with other qualified practitioners.

It is essential to the thorough comprehension of this last point that the laws regulating medical practice in this country should be clearly understood, as these can never be lost sight of by those who are engaged in the battle which we are now waging, and I will, before proceeding further, en-

deavour to state clearly the provisions of the Medical Act of 1858. For the protection of the public against ignorant and mischievous quacks, the Act provided that no person should be recognised as a legally-qualified practitioner of medicine in the United Kingdom unless registered in a Register appointed to be kept for that purpose. The Act provided that all persons possessing the degree of M.D. from any foreign or colonial University, and already practising in this country at the date of the passing of the Act, should be entitled to be so registered; but that, with this exception, (and a curious one in favour of those on whom the doctorate had been conferred by the Archbishop of Canterbury,) no medical practitioners could demand registration unless holding a licence, diploma, or degree, granted by one of the British Examining Boards specified in the schedule attached to the Act. It is, of course, self-evident that these provisions were intended solely to defend the public against incompetent practitioners, and, though it is perhaps to be regretted that the Act did not expressly require the Medical Council to examine, and, on proof of competency, to register the holders of foreign diplomas, and all others who had pursued a regular course of medical study, it could not be anticipated that any great injustice would be done by the omission of any such a clause; and still less,

assuredly, was it intended by this Act to secure to one sex a monopoly of all medical practice. But, at the present moment, it is certain that great danger exists that the Act may be wrested from its original purpose and made an almost insurmountable barrier to the admission of women to the authorised practice of medicine; and this because the Act, as it at present stands, makes it obligatory on all candidates to comply with certain conditions, and yet leaves it in the power of the Medical Schools, collectively, arbitrarily to preclude women from such compliance.

The following clauses of the Act of 1858 will show the absolute necessity that now exists for the registration of all practitioners of respectability:—

. . . “After January 1, 1859, the words ‘legally qualified Medical Practitioner,’ or ‘duly qualified Medical Practitioner,’ or any words importing a Person recognised by Law as a Medical Practitioner or Member of the Medical Profession, when used in any Act of Parliament, shall be construed to mean a Person registered under this Act. . . .

“After January 1, 1859, no Person shall be entitled to recover any Charge in any Court of Law for any Medical or Surgical Advice, Attendance, or for the Performance of any Operation, or for any Medicine which he shall have both prescribed and supplied, unless he shall prove upon the Trial that he is registered under this Act. . . .

“After January 1, 1859, no Certificate required by any Act now in force, or that may hereafter be passed, from any Physician, Surgeon, Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery, or other Medical Practitioner, shall be valid unless the Person signing the same be registered under this Act.

“ Any Person who shall wilfully and falsely pretend to be, or take or use the Name or Title of a Physician, Doctor of Medicine, Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery, . . . or any Name, Title, Addition, or Description implying that he is registered under this Act, or that he is recognised by Law as a Physician, or Surgeon, . . . shall, upon a summary Conviction for any such offence, pay a sum not exceeding Twenty Pounds.”

It is, then, sufficiently plain that any doctor practising in this country without the required registration, not only places himself in the position of a quack and a charlatan, but actually incurs legal penalties for assuming medical titles, however fairly they may have been won in the most eminent of foreign universities. It is therefore clear that it becomes a *sine quâ non* that any women, desiring to practise medicine in this country, should obtain their education in such a way as will entitle them to demand registration.

There are at this moment two Englishwomen whose names appear on the Register as legally qualified medical practitioners; and it may be necessary for me now to explain how they came respectively to attain this position, and how it happens that no more women are able to avail themselves of the means that were open to them.

Though several English ladies are recorded in history as having studied medical science, I am not aware that any of our country-women ever graduated in medicine before the year 1849, when Miss Elizabeth Blackwell, after surmounting many

difficulties, obtained the degree of M.D. from a college in the State of New York. Returning subsequently to England, she took advantage of the clause in the Act of 1858, which I have already mentioned, and demanded and obtained registration in the British Register. But the clause referred to was, as I have explained, retrospective only, and no one can now obtain an American degree, and in virtue of it claim registration in this country.

This being the case, when, in the year 1860, Miss Garrett resolved to begin the study of medicine, with a view to practising in England, it was necessary that she should obtain her education under the auspices of some one of the medical corporations empowered to give registrable qualifications. After trying in vain to obtain admission to one School and College after another, she finally found entrance at Apothecaries' Hall, which was, from its charter, taken, as I suppose, in conjunction with the provisions of the Apothecaries' Act of 1815,<sup>1</sup> incapable of refusing to examine any candidate who complied with its conditions of study.

<sup>1</sup> By this Act a Court of Examiners was appointed and declared to be "authorised *and required* to examine all person or persons applying to them, for the purpose of ascertaining the skill or abilities of such person or persons in the science of medicine, and his or their fitness and qualification to practise as Apothecaries;"—it being, however, stipulated that all candidates, so applying, should have gone through certain preliminary studies and apprenticeship.

In order to observe the regulations of Apothecaries' Hall, she was obliged to attend the lectures of certain specified teachers ; and though she was, in some cases, admitted to the ordinary classes,<sup>1</sup> in others she was compelled to pay very heavy fees for separate and private tuition by the recognised lecturers. She had also considerable difficulty in obtaining adequate hospital teaching, though there was, in truth, hardly the slightest difference between the advantages she needed and those now habitually accorded to lady probationers and trained nurses, who are constantly present with the ordinary students at the bedside and in the operating theatre.<sup>2</sup> She obtained admission, however, to the Middlesex Hospital, and might, I suppose, have studied there as long as she pleased, had she not been unfortunate enough to acquit herself too well in some of the *vivâ-voce* examinations in which she took part with the male students, thus arousing their manly wrath, which showed itself in a request that she should be required to leave the Hospital,<sup>3</sup> and this noble and magnanimous application was actually granted!

<sup>1</sup> The classes attended by Miss Garrett, in common with the other students, were as follows :—Chemistry, Practical Chemistry, Materia Medica, Botany, Zoology, and Natural Philosophy.

<sup>2</sup> See *Note H*.

<sup>3</sup> “A woman must have uncommon sweetness of disposition and manners to be *forgiven* for possessing superior talents and acquirements.”—Miss ELIZABETH SMITH (*Memoir, by H. M. Bowdler*).



She, however, completed her studies elsewhere, and especially at the London Hospital; being, it is to be presumed, too discreet to enter again on the field of competition. Thus, at length, she obtained her education, and, in 1865, received the licence to practise from Apothecaries' Hall, which enabled her to place her name upon the British Register. But no sooner had she thus demonstrated the existence of at least a postern gate by which women might enter the profession, than the authorities took alarm, and, with the express object of preventing other women from following so terrible a precedent, a rule was passed, forbidding students henceforth to receive any part of their education privately, it being well known that women would be rigorously excluded from some at least of the public classes!

As, then, the different doors by which the two ladies above-mentioned entered the profession of medicine were both closed after them, it is evident that, when, three years ago, I looked round for the means of obtaining medical education in this country, it was necessary that some new way should be devised. It is true that in several of the European Universities women were at that moment studying medicine;—indeed, I am not aware that any of the Italian,<sup>1</sup> French, or German

<sup>1</sup> In the year 1870 the question was formally asked of the Italian Government whether women were legally entitled to study in the Universities, and the answer was in the affirmative.

Universities have ever been closed against women who applied for admission. I might, no doubt, have obtained, at the world-renowned *Ecole de Médecine* in Paris, a medical education at least equal, and, in some respects, probably superior, to anything that this country affords; and at the University of Zurich, also, a considerable number of women have, for some years, been receiving an excellent medical education. But it seemed to me radically unjust, and most discreditable to Great Britain, that all her daughters who desired a University education should be driven abroad to seek it; only a small number of women could be expected thus to expatriate themselves, and those who did so would have to incur the great additional difficulty and disadvantage of studying all the departments of medical science in a foreign language, and under teachers whose experience had been acquired in a different climate and under different social conditions from our own. And even if these difficulties could be overcome, another objection appeared to me absolutely insuperable. The Act of 1858 distinctly declares that only British licenses, diplomas, and degrees can now claim registration, and that without registration no practitioner can be considered as legally qualified. It is well known with what distinguished honour Miss Garrett lately passed her examinations in Paris, and with what brilliant

success she gained one of the most valuable medical degrees in Europe, and yet in the official British Register her name appears only and solely as that of a licentiate of Apothecaries' Hall. As no such license was now open to me and to other women, it was clear that those of us who went abroad for education might expect, after years of severe labour, to return to England to be refused official recognition on the Register, and, in fact, in the eye of the law, to hold a position exactly analogous to that of the most ignorant quack or herbalist who might open a penny stall for the sale of worthless nostrums. As such a position was hardly to my taste, it became necessary to try other means.

It seemed to me highly desirable that, if women studied medicine at all, they should at once aim at what is supposed to be a high standard of education, and that, to avoid the possibility of cavil at their attainments, they should forthwith aspire to the medical degree of a British University.

I first applied to the University of London, of whose liberality one hears so much, and was told by the Registrar that the present Charter had been purposely so worded as to exclude the possibility of examining women for medical degrees, and that under that Charter nothing whatever could be done in their favour. Knowing that at Oxford and Cambridge the whole question was

complicated with regulations respecting residence, while, indeed, neither of these Universities furnished a complete medical education, my thoughts naturally turned to Scotland, to which so much credit is always given for its enlightened views respecting education, and where the Universities boast of their freedom from ecclesiastical and other trammels. In March 1869, therefore, I made my first application to the University of Edinburgh, and I hope in the following pages to give a rapid sketch of the chief events of the subsequent three years in connexion with that University, though time and space oblige me to make the sketch so brief that I must ask the reader's indulgence if, in some points, it is less plain and distinct than it might be if I could enter more fully into details.

For the sake of clearness, let me first explain, in few words, who constitute the different bodies that take a share in the government of Edinburgh University, taken in the order in which my application was considered by them. The Medical Faculty of course consists of Medical Professors only; the Senatus comprises all the Professors of every Faculty, and also the Principal; the University Court is composed of eight members only;<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The University Court consists of the Rector, the Principal, and the Lord Provost of Edinburgh; with five others appointed respectively by the Chancellor, the Rector, the Senatus, the Town-Council of Edinburgh, and the General Council of the University.

and lastly, the General Council of the University consists of all those graduates of Edinburgh who have registered their names as members. Each of these bodies had to be consulted, as also the Chancellor, before any important change could be made.

When I first went to Edinburgh, I found many most kind and liberal friends among the Professors. In the Medical Faculty itself, Sir James Simpson, Professor Hughes Bennett, and Professor Balfour, Dean of the Medical Faculty, at once espoused my cause ; and I need not say that Professor Masson and other members of the non-medical Faculties were not a whit behind in kindness and help. I found, on the other hand, a few determined enemies who would listen to nothing I could urge on the ground of either justice or mercy, and one or two who seemed to think that the fact of a woman's wishing to study medicine at all quite exempted them from the necessity of treating her even with ordinary courtesy. The majority, however, occupied a somewhat neutral position ;—they did not wish arbitrarily to stretch their power to exclude women from education, and yet they were alarmed at what seemed to them the magnitude and novelty of the change proposed.

Several Professors were especially timid about the question of matriculation, and argued that,

till they had some evidence of probable success, it would be premature to let women matriculate, since, by so doing, they would acquire rights and privileges of the most extensive kind. To meet this difficulty I gladly accepted a suggestion made to me privately by the Dean of the Medical Faculty, that I should, for the present, waive the question of matriculation, and should, during the summer months, attend his class in Botany and that of Professor Allman in Natural History, to see whether, as the *Spectator* expressed it, "Scotch and English students were really so much more brutal than Frenchmen and Germans," or whether a lady could, without discomfort, attend the ordinary classes. This plan met with much approval, and some of the Professors' wives most kindly offered to accompany me to the classes when the time should come. The Medical Faculty and Senatus successively sanctioned this tentative plan, and, after a short stay in Edinburgh, I left for England to make preparations for returning to spend the summer session as arranged.

But two or three hostile Professors appealed to the University Court; some of the students also sent up a memorial against the arrangement proposed, and the question was reconsidered.

I am anxious, as far as possible, to avoid personalities in this matter, and yet, I think, I cannot



properly tell my story without explaining at the outset that, in my opinion at least, the whole opposition to the medical education of women has in Edinburgh, been dictated by one man and his immediate followers. It is hardly necessary to say that that man is Sir Robert Christison,<sup>1</sup> whose great age and long tenure of office naturally give him unusual weight, both in the University and among the medical men of Edinburgh. Having said this, I need only remark further that Professor Christison has, ever since I came to Edinburgh, been the only professor and the only medical man who has had a seat in the University Court, and also the only person who has all along been a member

<sup>1</sup> On this point I may quote the following passage from the *Scotsman*, whose great influence has always been most nobly exerted in this question on the side of justice and liberality, and to whose help in arousing the moral sense of the community, we owe a debt that we can never hope to pay. The words quoted occur in a leading article referring to a meeting of the General Council, of which mention will be found elsewhere :—" Even Dr Christison, who is well known to be in truth the very soul and centre of the opposition, and whose personal influence alone has probably prevailed to carry it on so long in the teeth of public opinion, thought it advisable to say at the Council meeting, that ' if anything could be done to get the ladies out of their difficulty, he should be glad to be one to give them assistance.' This expression sounds somewhat farcical to those who are aware that the present dead-lock arises simply from the fact that the ladies' studies have now brought them to that point at which Dr Christison's class comes next in turn to be attended, and that the Professor, in spite of his verbal gallantry, has flatly refused either to instruct them himself or facilitate arrangements by which any one can do so in his place."—*Scotsman*, October 31, 1871.



of every body, without exception, by whom our interests have had to be decided, viz., of the Medical Faculty, the Senatus, the University Court, the University Council, and the Infirmary Board.

The question then was brought before the University Court in April 1869. The meetings of the Court are held in strict privacy, (against which the public and the members of the University Council have often protested,) and I can only state the result of their deliberation. On April 19th the following resolution was passed:—  
“The Court, considering the difficulties at present standing in the way of carrying out the resolution of the Senatus, as a temporary arrangement in the interest of one lady, and not being prepared to adjudicate finally on the question whether women should be educated in the medical classes of the University, sustain the appeals, and recall the resolution of the Senatus.”

The very palpable invitation to other ladies to come forward, which appeared on the face of this resolution, bore fruit; for, in the course of the next month or two, four more ladies expressed their wish to be admitted as students, and certain of the University authorities held out hopes that an application for *separate* classes would be successful. Accordingly, in June 1869, I addressed a letter to the Rector of the University,

who is also President of the University Court, enquiring whether the Court would “remove their present veto in case arrangements can be made for the instruction of women in separate classes; and whether, in that case, women will be allowed to matriculate in the usual way, and to undergo the ordinary Examination, with a view to obtain medical degrees in due course?”

I also wrote to the Senatus asking them to recommend the matriculation of women as medical students, on the understanding that separate classes should be formed; and, moreover, addressed a letter to the Dean of the Medical Faculty, offering, on behalf of my fellow-students and myself, to guarantee whatever minimum fee the Faculty might fix as remuneration for these separate classes.

On July 1st, 1869, at a meeting of the Medical Faculty of the University, it was resolved to recommend to the Senatus:—

(1.) That ladies be allowed to matriculate as medical students, and to pass the usual preliminary examination for registration; (2.) That ladies be allowed to attend medical classes, and to receive certificates of attendance qualifying for examination, provided the classes are confined entirely to ladies; (3.) That the medical professors be allowed to have classes for ladies, but no professor shall be compelled to give such course of lectures; (4.) That, in conformity with the request of Miss Jex-Blake's letter to the Dean, ladies be permitted to arrange with the Medical Faculty, or with the individual professors as to minimum fee for the classes.

At a meeting of the Senatus Academicus, July

2, 1869, the Report of the Medical Faculty was read, agreed to, and ordered to be transmitted to the University Court. At a meeting of the University Court, on 23d July 1869, "Mr Gordon, on behalf of the Committee appointed at last meeting to consider what course should be followed in order to give effect to the resolution of the Senatus, reported that the Committee were of opinion that the matter should be proceeded with under section xii. 2, of the Universities Act, as an improvement in the internal arrangements of the University. Mr Gordon then moved the following resolution, which was adopted :—

"The Court entertain an opinion favourable to the resolutions of the Medical Faculty in regard to the matriculation of ladies as medical students, and direct these resolutions to be laid before the General Council of the University for their consideration at next meeting."

This resolution was approved by the General Council on October 29th, 1869, and was sanctioned by the Chancellor on November 12th, 1869. The following regulations were officially issued at the same date, and inserted in the Calendar of the University :—

(1.) Women shall be admitted to the study of medicine in the University ; (2.) The instruction of women for the profession of medicine shall be conducted in separate classes, confined entirely to women ; (3.) The Professors of the Faculty of Medicine shall, for this purpose, be permitted to have separate classes for women ; (4.) Women, not intending to study

medicine professionally, may be admitted to such of these classes, or to such part of the course of instruction given in such classes, as the University Court may from time to time think fit and approve ; (5.) The fee for the full course of instruction in such classes shall be four guineas ; but in the event of the number of students proposing to attend any such class being too small to provide a reasonable remuneration at that rate, it shall be in the power of the professor to make arrangements for a higher fee, subject to the usual sanction of the University Court ; (6.) All women attending such classes shall be subject to all the regulations now or at any future time in force in the University as to the matriculation of students, their attendance on classes, Examination, or otherwise ; (7.) The above regulations shall take effect as from the commencement of session 1869-70.<sup>1</sup>

In accordance with the above resolutions, four other ladies and myself were, in October 1869, admitted provisionally to the usual preliminary examination in Arts, prescribed for medical students entering the University. Having duly passed, and received certificates to that effect from

<sup>1</sup> As some attempts have been lately made to throw doubt on the validity of the regulations just quoted, and, in fact, on the legality of the matriculation of women, I think it well to specify distinctly certain of the persons who were most immediately concerned in the University action just described. The University Court which drew up the above regulations, contained among its members Mr Moncreiff, then Lord Advocate of Scotland, and Mr Gordon, who had held the same office under a previous Government, besides two other legal members. The Chancellor who gave his express sanction to all the measures taken, was Lord Glen-corse, (Inglis,) the Lord Justice-General of Scotland. I leave the public to judge how far it is probable that these gentlemen con-joined to do an illegal and invalid act on behalf of the University.

the Dean of the Medical Faculty, we, after the issue of the regulations above cited, all matriculated in the ordinary manner at the office of the Secretary of the University. We paid the usual fee, inscribed our names in the University album, with the usual particulars, including the Faculty in which we proposed to study, and received the ordinary matriculation tickets, which bore our names, and declared us to be "*Cives Academicæ Edinensis.*" We were at the same time registered in due course as students of medicine, by the Registrar of the Branch Council for Scotland, in the Government register kept by order of the General Council of Medical Education and Registration of the United Kingdom, such registration being obligatory on all medical students, and affording the sole legal record of the date at which they have commenced their studies.

It seemed now as if smooth water had at length been reached, after seven months of almost incessant struggle. The temporary scheme first suggested had been set aside, but its place had been taken by one much more comprehensive, which had resulted from five months of consideration and consultation, and which had ultimately received the sanction of every one of the University authorities in succession. Not only were women allowed the privilege of matriculation which we had been told involved so much; but

formal regulations, entitled "For the Education of Women in Medicine in the University," had been framed, and have now for three years formed an integral part of the University Calendar.

For six months our hopes seemed realised. We pursued most interesting courses of study in the University, and found nothing but kindness at the hands of our teachers, and courtesy from the male students, whenever we happened to meet them in the quadrangle or on the staircases. Even Dr Christison was reported to have said in Senatus that, as the experiment was to be tried, he for one would co-operate to give it a fair trial.

Though the lectures were delivered at different hours, the instruction given to us and to the male students was identical, and, when the class examinations took place, we received and answered the same papers at the same hour and on identical conditions, having been told that marks would be awarded indifferently to "both sections of the class,"—this latter expression being, by the bye, repeatedly used during the course of the term by both the Professors who instructed us.

I am obliged now to mention the results which appeared in the prize-lists, not with a view to claim any special credit for the ladies,<sup>1</sup> (whose

<sup>1</sup> I fully agree in the following remarks made by a local paper when the results of the next summer term were declared :—"The whole number of gentlemen who appear in the prize-lists (in Botany) are 32, out of 140 competitors,—i.e., about 23 per cent. ;

efforts to obtain education might well make them more zealous than most of the ordinary students,) but because I believe that the facts I am about to mention had a real and immediate connexion with subsequent events.<sup>1</sup>

In the class of Physiology there had been 127 male students, of whom 25 appeared in the honours list; in the Chemistry class there were 226 male students, of whom 31 obtained honours; of the 5 women, 4 were in honours in both classes. One of the ladies obtained the third place in the Chemistry prize-list; and, as the two gentlemen above her had already gone through a course of lectures on the same subject, Miss Pechey was actually first of her year. In the College calendar it was stated that "the four students who have received the highest marks *are entitled* to have the Hope Scholarships,"—such scholarships giving free admission to the College laboratory, and hav-

of the ladies, *all*. We believe that these results prove, not that women's capacities are better than those of men—a thing that few people would assert—but that these women who are devoting themselves to obtain, in spite of all difficulties, a thorough knowledge of their profession, are far more thoroughly in earnest than most of the men are, and that their ultimate success is certain in proportion. Nor would we omit the inference that, this being so, those who wantonly throw obstacles in the way of this gallant little band incur a proportionately heavy responsibility, as wanting not only in the spirit of chivalry, but even in the love of fair play, which we should be sorry to think wanting in any Briton."—*Daily Review*, August 5, 1870.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Miss Garrett's experience, p. 78.



ing been founded by the late Professor Hope from the proceeds of lectures given to ladies some fifty years previously.<sup>1</sup>

It had occurred to us that if any lady won this scholarship she might be debarred from making full use of it as regards the laboratory, in consequence of the prohibition against mixed classes, but as it had been distinctly ordained that we were to be subject to "all the regulations in force in the University as to examinations," it had *not* occurred to us as possible that the very name of Hope Scholar could be wrested from the successful candidate and given over her head to the fifth student on the list, who had the good fortune to be a man.<sup>2</sup>

But this was actually done.

At the same time that the Professor announced to us his intention of withholding the Hope Scholarship from the student who had won it, on the ground that, having studied at a different hour, she was not a member of *The Chemistry Class*, though he, at the same time, gave her a bronze medal of the University, (to which I should think her claim must have been neither greater nor less, since these medals were given to the five students

<sup>1</sup> I am told that on this occasion the obstructives of the day actually shut the College gates on the ladies, but that the gallant old Professor, nothing daunted, admitted them through a ground-floor window in South College Street!

<sup>2</sup> See *Note I*.

highest on the list,) he offered us written certificates of having attended a "ladies' class in the University," as of course he saw that to give the ordinary certificates of attendance on "*The Chemistry Class of the University*" would be to destroy his own argument with reference to the Scholarship. As, however, such certificates were absolutely worthless to us as students of medicine, we declined them, and appealed to the Senatus to ordain that the ordinary certificates should be granted to us, as they alone would qualify for professional examination. At the same time Miss Pechey made an appeal to have the Hope Scholarship awarded to her in due course. It is hardly credible that (by very narrow majorities in each case) the Senatus decided that we were to have exactly the ordinary certificates, which declared us to have attended *the Chemistry Class* of the University of Edinburgh, and yet acquiesced in Miss Pechey's being deprived of her Scholarship on the ground that she was not a member of that class!

I do not wish to dwell longer on these incidents, but I have narrated them here because I believe that the above mentioned results of the class examinations aroused in our opponents a conviction that the so-called experiment was not going to fail of itself, as they had confidently hoped, but that if it was to be suppressed at all, vigorous measures must be taken for that purpose.

At the previous meeting of the University Council, no Professor had stood up to oppose the admission of women, though Dr Andrew Wood had covered himself with glory by protesting that he had too many sons to provide for, to acquiesce in the education of women for the Medical Profession!<sup>1</sup> At the next meeting, however, of the Council, in April 1870, Professor Masson moved that, in view of the success that had hitherto attended the ladies' studies, the existing regulations should be so far relaxed as to allow of the attendance of women in the ordinary classes, where no

<sup>1</sup> The following passage occurs in a leading article on the riot got up in Philadelphia by male medical students, when in 1869 ladies were first admitted to the Pennsylvania Hospital:—"Their riotous procedure is just a manifestation of the same trades-union spirit that will stoop to any meanness, join in any tyranny, be guilty of any cruelty, rather than allow interference with what is considered as its 'vested rights.' In last week's *Lancet* we find a letter from a medical man, who asks with naïve surprise whether the advocates of female physicians can possibly be aware that there are hundreds of medical *men* not able to make a comfortable living! We know not which most to admire—the cool assumption that the medical profession exists only or mainly to fill the pockets of its members, or the serene assurance that takes it for granted that no woman has a right to expect to be allowed the chance of earning a living, till all male competitors are safely and sufficiently provided for! It is rather amusing to contrast the evidently keen dread of successful competition which degrades a man thus to plead *in formâ pauperis*, with the voluble assurances, in this and other medical papers, that nature has clearly interdicted to women the practice of medicine, and that here at least they cannot but utterly fail."—*Scotsman*, Dec. 4, 1869.

special reasons existed to the contrary, that they might be spared the additional expense, inconvenience, and difficulty, attendant on the formation of separate classes in every subject. Professor Balfour, Dean of the Medical Faculty, seconded this motion, and expressed his opinion that arrangements might easily be made to carry it out. Professors Laycock and Christison, however, opposed it vigorously, and that in speeches of such a character that the *Times*<sup>1</sup> remarked in a leading article :—" We cannot sufficiently express the indignation with which we read such language, and we must say that it is the strongest argument against the admission of young ladies to the Edinburgh medical classes that they would attend the lectures of Professors capable of talking in this strain."<sup>2</sup> When the vote was taken, the motion in our favour was lost by forty-seven votes to fifty-eight, and no change was therefore made in the University regulations.

The Professor of Botany kindly made arrangements for giving to us and other ladies a separate course of lectures, though he much regretted to be forced to this double, and needless, expenditure of time and trouble. Dr Allman, the Professor of Natural History, who had in the previous summer consented to my entering his ordinary class, stated that his health would

<sup>1</sup> *Times*, April 25, 1870.

<sup>2</sup> See *Note J*.

not allow him to undertake the labour of two classes, and, therefore, he could not teach us. We then made application for instruction to Dr Alleyne Nicholson, the extra-mural teacher of the same subject, and he at once agreed to our request. Before making any arrangements, he spoke to the members of his class at their first meeting, and, mentioning our application, he enquired whether they would unite with him in inviting us to join their class. This they unani- mously did; and, as we had no objection to offer, the first "mixed class" was inaugurated, and continued throughout the summer without the slightest inconvenience.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "In answer to an incorrect statement which appeared in one of the medical papers respecting his class, Dr Alléyne Nicholson has forwarded to its editor a letter, from which we extract the follow- ing passage :— . . . "The course of lectures on Zoology, which I am now delivering to a mixed class, is identically the same as the course which I delivered last winter to my ordinary class of male students. I have not hitherto emasculated my lectures in any way whatsoever, nor have I the smallest intention of so doing. In so acting, I am guided by the firm conviction that little stress is to be laid on the purity and modesty of those who find themselves able to extract food for improper feelings from such a purely scientific subject as zoology, however freely handled. 'To the pure all things are pure.'" In the moral courage and manly purity of the above letter we find fresh cause to congratulate the ladies on the teacher they have secured on a subject which might easily have been made offensive by a man of prurient mind. As teachers of truly scientific spirit become more common, we shall, doubtless, hear less and less of the difficulties of giving instruction to classes composed of medical students of both sexes."—*Daily Review*, June 14, 1870.

In the meantime, we were anxious to make arrangements for the next winter session, and it was especially necessary that a course of instruction in Anatomy should be provided, as the subject was one of the greatest importance, and the University professor flatly refused either to instruct us himself or allow his assistant to do so in any way whatever. Under these circumstances we endeavoured to obtain a competent extra-mural teacher who should form a special class for our instruction ; but I was repeatedly warned that, by this time, the medical prejudice had been so strongly aroused against us, and the medical influence was so strongly at work, that we should fail in our endeavours, as no young medical man dare run the risk of being ostracised for giving us help. The only extra-mural teacher of Anatomy who was already recognised by the University was Dr Handyside, who was one of a band of nine associated lecturers who conjointly rented a building, called Surgeons' Hall, for their lectures. Some of these lecturers were indignant at the way in which we were treated in the University, and, in July 1870, they, by a majority, passed the following resolutions :—

1. That it is expedient that lecturers in this Medical School should be free to lecture to female as well as to male students.

2. That no restrictions be imposed on the lecturers as to the manner in which instruction is to be imparted to women.<sup>1</sup>

After the passing of this regulation, we applied to Dr Handyside to know if he could make arrangements for giving us a separate class. He replied that it would be quite impossible for him to do so consistently with his duty to his other students, but that if we liked to attend his course of Anatomy in the ordinary way, he should be happy to receive us. Dr Heron Watson similarly consented to admit us to his ordinary course of Lectures on Surgery, and so our arrangements for winter lectures were complete.

The class of Practical Anatomy always meets at the beginning of October, although the lectures do not commence till the following month. The more studious and industrious students usually come up at the earlier date, but those who care

<sup>1</sup> I am sorry to say that hardly a year later a majority of these lecturers were so overborne by the prevailing medical influence, that they rescinded the above regulations, merely permissive as they were, and, in spite of the remonstrances of the gentlemen whose classes we had attended, passed a resolution forbidding any of their number to instruct lady students, either in mixed or separate classes, in Surgeons' Hall. That no doubt whatever might remain as to the *animus* which dictated this resolution, they distinctly confined the prohibition to the case of ladies *who were registered students of medicine*,—expressly allowing the continued instruction of midwives! I wish that space would permit of my quoting the remarks made on this occasion by the *Scotsman* of July 19, 1871, and by other papers.



less about their work seldom appear till November, as that is the beginning of the compulsory session. All through October we studied under Dr Handyside with great comfort; the students who worked with us, though in another part of the room, were never uncivil, and in fact we hardly exchanged a dozen sentences with any of them during the month. Dr Handyside and his demonstrator both told us that they had never seen so much steady, earnest work as since we joined the class, and expressed their opinion that the results were quite as valuable for the male students as for our ourselves. With November 1st the lectures began, and everything went on satisfactorily for another ten days.

About this time, acting on the advice of a medical friend, we made an application for permission to study in the wards of the Royal Infirmary, and, somewhat to our surprise, were met by a curt refusal. As we knew that several of the managers were liberal-minded and just men, we felt sure that they could not have fully understood the importance to us of the concession we desired, and, on enquiry, I found this was the case. One of those who had voted against our admission confessed to me that he had, in so doing, been guided simply by the medical members of the Board, and that he was not even aware that we were matriculated students of the University, and that we

could not complete our education without attending the Infirmary, as there was no other hospital in Edinburgh of the size prescribed for "qualifying instruction." We, therefore, drew up a memorial stating our grounds of application, and another was also sent in by our two teachers, Dr Watson and Dr Handyside, urging on the Board the great injustice that would be done by our exclusion. We also obtained and sent in a written paper from three of the medical officers of the Infirmary, promising to give us all needful instruction if we were admitted.<sup>1</sup> When these documents were presented to the managers, a majority of those present were in favour of our immediate admission, but, on the ground of want of notice, our opponents got the matter deferred for a week. From that time the behaviour of the students changed. It is not for me to say what means were used, or what strings were pulled; but I know that the result was, that instead of being, as heretofore, silent and inoffensive, a certain proportion of the students with whom we worked became markedly offensive and insolent, and took every opportunity of practising the petty annoyances that occur to thoroughly ill-bred lads,—such as shutting doors in our faces, ostentatiously crowding into the seats we usually occupied, bursting into horse-laughs and howls

<sup>1</sup> See *Note K.*

when we approached, as if a coalition had been formed to make our position as uncomfortable as might be. At the same time a students' petition against our admission to the Infirmary was handed about, and 500 signatures were obtained, though, if some of the reports I heard were true, but a very small number out of the 500 had even read the petition before signing it. Be this as it may, the petition was got ready for the adjourned meeting, and when that came, every opponent we had among the managers was at his place, while some of our friends were unavoidably absent, and the Lord Provost, being in the chair, was precluded from voting, so that the medical party gained an easy victory. But when I say the medical party, I ought to explain that three medical men voted on our side,—a point on which I shall have to say something subsequently.

The students were naturally elated at finding so much attention paid to their petition,<sup>1</sup> especially as I was told that some of the medical Professors had warmly applauded them for their exertions, and I suppose the lowest section among them began to wonder whether, if they had succeeded in keeping us out of the Infirmary, they might not, by a little extra brutality, drive us away from the lecture-room. Two days later, came the second competitive examination of the

<sup>1</sup> See *Note L.*

term, and on this day occurred the riot, when the gates were shut in our faces by a mob,<sup>1</sup> who stood within, smoking and passing about bottles of whiskey, while they abused us in the foulest possible language. It would be difficult to speak in too strong terms of the conduct of those engaged in this outrage, or of those who were morally responsible for it; but I am glad to say a word to-day about a part of the story which has not been made sufficiently public,—viz., the conduct of those of the students whose indignation against the rioters was even deeper than our own.<sup>2</sup> One gentleman rushed down from Surgeons' Hall, and, at great risk to himself, forced open the gates for our admission, and a number of others made their way in after us to see that we came to no harm. When the class, which was interrupted throughout by the clamour outside, was over, Dr Handyside asked me if we would withdraw through a back door, but I said that I thought there were quite enough gentlemen in the class to protect us; and so it proved. As I spoke, a number came around us and formed a regular body-guard in front, behind, and on each side, and, encom-

<sup>1</sup> This mob was not wholly or mainly composed of our fellow-students at Surgeons' Hall, though a few of them were present. The larger number, however, belonged to the lowest class of University students, who had been summoned together by an anonymous missive circulated in the class-rooms the same morning.

<sup>2</sup> See *Note M.*

passed by them, we passed through the still howling crowd at the gate, and reached home with no other injuries than those inflicted on our dresses by the mud hurled at us by our chivalrous foes. Nor was this all. When we arrived at the College next day, at the same hour, we found quite a formidable array of gentlemen with big sticks in their hands, who were keeping back a rabble that looked greatly disgusted, but merely vented their spite in remarkably bad language as the gentlemen referred to raised their hats as we approached, and instantly followed us in and took their seats on the back rows. After the lecture was over they formed round us, as on the evening before, escorted us home, gave us three deafening cheers, and dispersed. The explanation of all which was, that, hearing rumours of renewed rioting, a certain number of manly men among the students had resolved that the thing should not be, and for the next two or three days this same stalwart body-guard awaited and attended us daily, till the rowdies tacitly agreed to lay aside hostilities. Then I myself asked our volunteer guard to discontinue their most chivalrous escort, and quiet was restored.

No further event of importance occurred during the winter, except the meetings of Infirmary contributors, at the first of which a close contest took place between managers known to

be favourable to us and those known to be unfriendly. A new Act came into operation at this date, and all the managers had to vacate their seats unless re-elected. I can give no more significant proof of the immense amount of pressure brought to bear by the medical clique than by stating that, of the three medical men who had voted for us six weeks before, it was found when the day of election came that two had turned their coats, while the one who refused to do so was unseated by the medical body that he had represented !

At the Contributors' Meeting on Jan. 2, 1871, at which six managers were to be elected, the Lord Provost himself proposed the election of six gentlemen known to be friendly to the admission of ladies to the Infirmary ; but by the very narrow majority of 94 votes to 88, the managers previously on the Board were returned. No other question was raised, and those who voted with the Lord Provost did so simply in consequence of the importance they attached to the exclusion of the ladies by those managers who now desired re-election.<sup>1</sup>

At a subsequent meeting, the Rev. Professor

<sup>1</sup> It is worth remark that, for the first time within memory, lady contributors used their right of voting on this occasion, and it is tolerably significant that more than a dozen voted on our behalf, and not one against us. The number of doctors who voted for us was three or four ; against us, more than twenty.

Charteris brought forward a motion expressive of the desire of the contributors that immediate arrangements should be made for the admission of the ladies, and this motion was seconded by Sir James Coxe, M.D., but was lost by a similarly small majority. On this latter occasion, two incidents occurred that deserve notice. Firstly, a petition in favour of the ladies' admission was presented, signed by 956 women of Edinburgh.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, Mrs Nichol, an elderly lady whose name is venerated throughout Edinburgh, made, in spite of ill health, the great exertion of coming forward at that public meeting, to ask one question,—“not,” as she distinctly said, “in the interests of the lady students, but on behalf of those women who looked forward to see what kind of men were they who were to be the sole medical attendants of the next generation of women, if women doctors are not allowed.” The question which she said she had been commissioned to ask by more than 1300 women, belong-

<sup>1</sup> The text of the petition was as follows :—

“*To the Court of Contributors to the Royal Infirmary.*

“LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—We, the undersigned Women of Edinburgh, not being able to attend the Meeting at which the admission of Female Medical Students to the Infirmary will be discussed, desire hereby to express our great interest in the issues involved, and our earnest hope that full facilities for Hospital study will be afforded by the Managers to all women who desire to enter the Medical Profession.”



ing to all classes and all parts of the country, was as follows :—

“ If the students studying at present in the Infirmary cannot contemplate with equanimity the presence of ladies as fellow-students, how is it possible that they can possess either the scientific spirit or the personal purity of mind which alone would justify their presence in the female wards during the most delicate operations on, and examinations of, female patients ? ”

This question was received, according to the newspaper report, with “ *Laughter, hisses, and applause,* ” but no one opened his mouth to reply. Perhaps in truth no reply could have been more significant than the burst of yells and howls which greeted the question from a gallery filled by students, who indeed so conducted themselves generally as to elicit a remark to me from a learned Professor, famous for his quaint sayings : “ Well ! ye can say now ye’ve fought with beasts at Ephesus ! ”

About the same time a petition, signed by twenty-three male students,<sup>1</sup> was presented to the Infirmary managers, praying that the lady students should no longer be excluded, but no attention was paid to the request ; and when subsequently a similar application was made to the Managers by a deputation of very influential citizens,<sup>2</sup> they again refused, by a majority, to do

<sup>1</sup> See *Note N*.

<sup>2</sup> Several of the principal citizens, including the senior member

anything in our behalf. Professor Balfour moved the appointment of a Committee to enquire into a scheme for the instruction of ladies proposed by certain of the medical officers of the Infirmary, but Professor Christison carried an amendment negating even this measure; and thus another year of Hospital instruction was lost.

With each succeeding Session new students joined our small class, partly in consequence of the very kind encouragement held out by Lady Amberley, Dr Garrett Anderson, and other friends, in the way of Scholarships; for, since public indignation was excited by the refusal of the Hope Scholarship to Miss Pechey, hardly a term has passed without some generous offer of valuable prizes for those ladies who needed such assistance to pursue their studies, and who, by their success in competitive examinations, showed themselves worthy of them. Such kindness is the more valuable at a time when, by incessant delays and constantly-recurring difficulties, every effort is evidently being made to exhaust alike the patience and the purses of the troublesome women who desire to complete the work they have begun.

for Edinburgh, had spoken strongly on our behalf at the meetings just mentioned; indeed it has been remarkable throughout how strongly the municipal element has been on our side, while the leaders of the opposition have, with hardly an exception, been medical men, and their immediate friends and followers.

It is not necessary for me to enter into details respecting the ladies' progress in their studies, further than to state that in every course in which they have competed for prizes, more than half of the whole class have been in the honours list, and in some cases every lady student has so appeared;<sup>1</sup> so that any refusal to grant them further instruction can hardly be based on the plea that they have not done their best to avail themselves of what was already afforded.

During the two years, 1869-70 and 1870-71, the five original students who entered in 1869 had completed the first half of their University course, partly by attendance on separate classes in the University, and partly by means of extra-mural lectures. But at the end of these two years a dead-lock appeared imminent. The rules of the University forbid any student to take more than four classes outside the walls, and those four classes we had already taken. Professor Christison and others, whose classes came next in term, gave a curt refusal to our request for instruction, although we again offered to guarantee any fee that might be required. In this dilemma we applied for help to the Senatus, and suggested that, if no other means could be devised, the difficulty might be solved in either of two ways—(1) by appointment of special University lecturers,

<sup>1</sup> See *Note O*.

whose payment we would guarantee; or (2) by the relaxation in our case of the ordinary regulations, so that we might take an increased number of extra-mural classes. When these proposals came before the Senatus, it was decided to take a legal opinion as to the rights and powers of the University; and an opinion adverse to our interests having been given, the Senatus decided, on July 28, 1871, by a majority of one, that they would take no action in the matter.

In these circumstances, a Committee<sup>1</sup> of friends which had been formed for our assistance, caused a statement of the facts to be drawn up and submitted to other Counsel, and obtained from the Lord Advocate and Sheriff Fraser an Opinion to the following effect:<sup>2</sup>—That it was quite competent to the University authorities to make any necessary provision for the completion of the ladies' education; and that the Medical Faculty were bound to admit the ladies to professional examination on the subjects in which they were already qualified to pass.

I must explain that the advice of counsel had been asked on this last point in consequence of a rumour that difficulties might be made respecting the examination that was now due at the end of two years of professional study. The first official

<sup>1</sup> See *Note P.*      <sup>2</sup> See *Note Q.*

notice on this subject was, however, received by us on Saturday, October 14, after the fees for such examination had been paid, and tickets of admission obtained; the examination itself being due on the 24th of the same month, and the ladies concerned having studied for two years with the view of passing this examination, for which they had more especially been preparing assiduously for the last six months.

On the following Monday, October 16, I, moreover, received an official notice that the Dean of the Medical Faculty had been interdicted by the Faculty from giving to ladies any papers for the Preliminary Examination in Arts, which was to take place *on the following day*, October 17! Three ladies had come up to Edinburgh from different parts of the country with the express object of passing these examinations, and, if prevented from doing so, they would be retarded in their studies to the extent of one year. The excessive shortness of the notice given made it impossible even to appeal to the Senatus, and the only course open to me was to submit the facts for the opinion of counsel. This was done, and we were informed that the course taken by the Medical Faculty was quite illegal,<sup>1</sup> while an express invitation to lady students formed part of the official calendar of the University. This opinion

<sup>1</sup> See *Note R.*

was forwarded to the Dean, whose kindness to us had been invariable ; and, I am sure that he was glad by it to be released from the painful necessity of obeying the Medical Faculty in this matter. The ladies were accordingly examined in the ordinary course.

But the excitements of the month were not yet at an end. On applying for matriculation tickets the ladies were informed by the Clerk that the Principal, Sir Alexander Grant, had written him word that, in consequence of representations made to him by Professor Christison, he desired that no ladies should at present be allowed to matriculate. On this point, and that regarding the Professional Examination, we, of course, appealed at once to the Senatus. At the meeting at which our appeal was considered, "the Committee for securing complete Medical Education for Women in Edinburgh" also presented the opinion obtained by them from counsel, together with a letter urging that complete provision should be made for our instruction. At their meeting on October 21, the Senatus at once decided both points of appeal in our favour. The Principal's prohibition, which had never had any legal weight, was overruled, and the permission to women to matriculate and pass the Arts Examinations was renewed, and declared to be in force so long as the present regulations stood in the calendar. The Medical

Faculty also were instructed at once to admit the ladies who were prepared for it to the Professional Examination on the following day ; and I am happy to say that, in spite of the incessant worry to which they had been subjected for the past ten days, they all passed successfully. I am sure that all those who have had to prepare for severe University examinations will appreciate the difficulties under which they did so.<sup>1</sup>

A few days later came a meeting of the University Council, when Dr Alexander Wood made a gallant attempt to get a vote passed to the effect that "the University is bound, in honour and justice, to render it possible for those women who have already commenced their studies, to complete them."<sup>2</sup> The *Lancet* remarked, respect-

<sup>1</sup> On a subsequent very similar occasion the *Scotsman* remarked : — "It may be noticed that this is the third time that startling announcements have been fired at the lady students on the very eve of important examinations, possibly with the professional view of testing the soundness of their nerves." — *Scotsman*, March 21, 1872.

<sup>2</sup> The text of the resolution was as follows : — "That in the opinion of this Council, the University authorities have, by published resolutions, induced women to commence the study of medicine at the University ; that these women, having prosecuted their studies to a certain length, are prevented from completing them from want of adequate provision being made for their instruction ; that this Council, without again pronouncing any opinion on the advisability of women studying medicine, do represent to the University Court that, after what the Senatus and Court have already done, they are at least bound in honour and justice, to render it possible for those women who have already commenced their studies to complete them."



ing this motion :—"This is precisely the ground we have always taken up about the matter ; and we hope that the General Council of the University will, by the adoption of Dr Alexander Wood's motion, put an end to the controversy which had redounded so little to the credit of that school."<sup>1</sup>

A memorial in favour of the resolution was also presented, signed by more than nine thousand women, residing in all parts of the country, and representing almost every rank in society.<sup>2</sup> Very vigorous opposition to it was, however, made by Professors Turner, Thomson, and Christison, all of whom were members of the Medical Faculty, and ultimately an amendment, which proposed to leave the question to be settled by the Senatus and University Court, was carried by 107 votes to 97.<sup>3</sup>

At a meeting of the Senatus held on Oct. 30th, the question of making further provision for

<sup>1</sup> *Lancet*, October 28, 1871.

<sup>2</sup> I am assured by Mrs Henry Kingsley, who kindly acted as *Hon. Sec.* to this memorial, that the signatures might have been multiplied tenfold, had any organized effort been made to obtain them by means of paid agents taking the papers from house to house.

<sup>3</sup> "The Edinburgh school has come badly out of its imbroglio with the lady students. The motion of Dr Alexander Wood, to which we made reference last week, was negatived by a majority of ten. As we then pointed out, the issue before the General Council was neither more nor less than this—to keep faith with the female students whom the University had allowed to proceed two years in their medical curriculum. The Council was not

the instruction of women was brought forward, and a letter was received from the Committee of our friends stating that, "in the event of special lecturers being appointed by the University to give qualifying instruction to women, the Committee are willing to guarantee the payment to them of any sum that may be fixed by the Senatus for their remuneration, in case the fees of the ladies are insufficient for that purpose; and that, if necessary, they are willing further to undertake to provide such rooms and accommodation as may be required for the delivery of the said lectures, if it should be found absolutely impossible for the University to provide space for that purpose." After a long debate the Senatus decided, by a majority, that they would not take any steps to enable us to complete our education. At a meeting a few days later the Senatus further decided, by fourteen

asked to commit itself in the slightest degree to any opinion, favourable or unfavourable, to the admission of ladies to a medical career. It had only to concede, in common courtesy, not to say common fairness, the right to which the best legal advice had clearly shown the female students to be entitled,—the right to carry on the studies they had been allowed to prosecute half way towards graduation. Will it be believed? An amendment postponing the settlement of the difficulty till it had been duly considered by the authorities of the University was put and carried; as if there was any more room for "consideration" in the matter! Thus Edinburgh stands convicted of having acted unfairly towards seven ladies whom she first accepted as pupils, and then stopped half-way in their career."—*Lancet*, Nov. 4, 1871.

votes to thirteen, to recommend to the University Court that the existing regulations in favour of female students be rescinded, without prejudice, however, to the rights of those already studying. This resolution was, as I said, passed by fourteen votes to thirteen, and it may be worth while to mention that two of the fourteen votes were those of Dr Christison and Sir Alexander Grant, who were themselves members of the University Court to which the recommendation was to be made. That the proposed measure was not the wish of a real majority of the Professors was soon made abundantly clear, for a protest against it was sent up to the Court, signed by eighteen out of the thirty-five Professors of the University, while two out of the remaining seventeen were persistently neutral, never indeed having voted on the question from first to last. In the teeth of this protest it was, of course, almost impossible that the Regulations could be rescinded, and so they were once more confirmed by the University Court on January 3, 1872.

The next event of importance was the annual re-election of Infirmary managers, six of whom were to be chosen at the contributors' meeting at the beginning of January 1872. As on a former occasion, the election evidently turned wholly on our admission to, or exclusion from, the Infirmary wards. The medical party moved the

re-election of the former managers, and they were sure of the support of everybody who did not consider our admission a vital question. Our friends, on the contrary, brought forward a list of gentlemen, all of whom were known to be friendly to our cause. After a very warm debate the list of our friends proved to be successful, being supported by 177 votes, while 168 were recorded on the other side. Professor Masson then moved that a Statute be enacted by the Court of Contributors, giving the same educational advantages in the Infirmary to female as well as to male students. The hostile party, finding themselves in a minority, endeavoured to prevent this being put to the vote on technical grounds which were subsequently found to be of no legal importance. Failing in this, they then adopted the remarkably dignified course of decamping in a body, accompanied, I must confess, by some ironical cheers from those left behind. In the lull that succeeded Professor Masson brought forward his motion, which was seconded by the Rev. Dr Guthrie, and passed without a dissentient voice. This Statute is, therefore, now actually law in the Infirmary, and considering that managers friendly to us had also been elected, it might have been thought that our difficulties there were at end. But now comes the most extraordinary part of the whole story. On a scrutiny of the votes it was found

that with the majority had voted twenty-eight firms, thirty-one ladies, and seven doctors. On the other side were fourteen firms, two ladies, thirty-seven doctors, and three druggists. These figures may seem, indeed, to have a tolerable moral significance, but it is not with that that I am at this moment concerned. It occurred to the defeated party that here might be found a straw for them, drowning, to catch at,—that possibly a legal objection might be sustained against the votes of firms which were so largely in our favour, and that, if so, the victory might yet be secured!<sup>1</sup> The result was, that, when the Contributors assembled at the adjourned meeting,<sup>2</sup> for the purpose of hearing the result of the scrutiny and

<sup>1</sup> “It mattered nothing that firms had voted ever since the Infirmary was founded ; that contributors qualified only as members of firms had, as has now been ascertained, sat over and over again on the Board of Management, and on the Committee of Contributors. It was of equally slight importance that the firms whom it was now sought to disqualify had been among the most generous benefactors of the charity, and that, with the imminent prospect before them of great pecuniary necessity, it would probably be impossible, without their aid, to carry out even the plans for the new building. The firms had voted in favour of the ladies, and the firms must go, if, at least, the law would (as it probably will not) bear out the medical men in their reckless endeavour to expel them.”—*Scotsman*, January 29, 1872.

<sup>2</sup> At this meeting a Committee of Contributors, previously appointed, reported in favour of the admission of lady students, and against the exclusion of the votes of firms, and this Report was approved by 232 votes to 227. On this occasion there voted for the approval of the Report 41 ladies and 10 doctors ; against it, 6 ladies, 44 doctors, and 5 druggists.

the final declaration of the election, the Lord Provost found himself served with an Interdict forbidding him to declare the new managers duly elected, on the ground that the votes of firms were incompetent, and that by means of these the majority had been obtained!

Instances have occurred before now where personal feelings have triumphed over public interests, but I do not think that I ever heard of quite so reckless a course as this, by which the medical clique has plunged the great Edinburgh Hospital into litigation, and that with some of its own most generous supporters, rather than allow a dozen women to obtain in its wards the instruction that the Contributors had decreed they should receive!<sup>1</sup>

The litigation thus begun is still pending, and the incomplete Board of Managers have for all these months carried on the business of the Infirmary without any representatives at all from the Court of Contributors; and it is probable that they make the very fact of their deficient numbers the excuse for having up to this moment given no effect whatever to the Statute unanimously passed in our favour last January by the Court of Contributors. We applied immediately after the meeting for tickets of admission, but were told that the managers must first be consulted, and from that day to this no tickets have

<sup>1</sup> See *Note S.*

been issued to us, though the statute referred to legally secured that "henceforth all registered students of medicine shall be admitted to the educational advantages of the Infirmary, without distinction of sex." The matter, however, can now be only one of time; and, since the law of the Infirmary is at length on our side, our opponents may, I think, rest assured that our patience in awaiting the end will be at least equal to theirs. In all such struggles a present triumph may be snatched by those in brief authority, but the future belongs inalienably to the cause of justice and liberality.

In the meantime, I had, on behalf of my fellow-students and myself, appealed to the University Court to provide us with the means of completing our education, and our friends of the Committee also forwarded to the Court a further legal Opinion from the Lord Advocate and Sheriff Fraser, to the effect,—that the University authorities had full powers to permit the matriculation of women in 1869; that the Resolutions then passed amounted to a permission to women to "*study medicine*" in the University, and that therefore the women concerned were entitled to demand the means of doing so; and finally, that if such means were persistently refused, the legal mode of redress lay in an Action of Declarator.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Note Q.*



On January 8th, 1872, the University Court declared that they could not make any arrangements to enable us to pursue our studies with a view to a degree, but that, *if we would altogether give up the question of graduation*,<sup>1</sup> and be content with Certificates of Proficiency, they would try to meet our views!

In reply, I represented to the Court that no "Certificates" were recognised by the Medical Act, and that any such documents would therefore be perfectly useless to us. I further urged that as matriculation fees had been exacted from us, in addition to the fees for tuition, and as we had been required to pass the Preliminary Examination "*for the medical degree*," and as some of our own number had moreover passed the first Professional Examination, I could not but believe that we were entitled to demand the means of completing the ordinary University education, with a view to obtaining the ordinary degree; such belief being moreover confirmed by the emphatic opinion of very distinguished counsel. On these grounds I entreated the Court to re-

<sup>1</sup> In support of this suggestion the Court remarked that the question had been needlessly "complicated by the introduction of the subject of graduation, which is not essential to the completion of a medical or other education." They *forgot*, however, to mention that though a degree is "not essential" to a medical education, it is absolutely indispensable to any practical use of it,—that is to say, to any lawful practice of the medical profession.

consider their decision, and made the following suggestion :—

“ That, as the main difficulty before your honourable Court seems to be that regarding graduation, with which we are not immediately concerned at this moment, we are quite willing to rest our claims to ultimate graduation on the facts as they stand up to the present date ; and, in case your honourable Court will now make arrangements whereby we can continue our education, we will undertake not to draw any arguments in favour of our right to graduation from such future arrangements, so that they may at least be made without prejudice to the present legal position of the University.”

I appeal to every intelligent man and woman to say whether these words, taken in connection with my previous argument, were in the slightest degree ambiguous, or whether any doubt could really exist that in them I was pleading for facilities for such an education as would ultimately enable us to become legal practitioners of medicine, although I was willing that the actual question of graduation should remain in abeyance for a few months, till decided by legal authority, or otherwise. The public evidently so understood my letter, which was published in the papers, for it was considered that I had substantially gained my end, when the following reply from the secretary of the Court was also published :—

“ I am desired to inform you that you appear to ask no more than was offered by the Court in their resolution of the 8th ultimo, in which it was stated that, while the Court were restrained by legal doubts as to the power of the University to grant degrees to women from considering ‘ the expediency

of taking steps to obtain, in favour of female students, an alteration of an ordinance which might be held not to apply to women,' they were 'at the same time desirous to remove, so far as possible, any present obstacle in the way of a complete medical education being given to women; provided always that medical instruction to women be imparted in strictly separate classes.' On the assumption, therefore, that while you at present decline the offer made by the Court with reference to certificates of proficiency, you now ask merely that arrangements should be made for completing the medical education of yourself and the other ladies on behalf of whom you write, I am to state that the Court are quite ready to meet your views. If, therefore, the names of extra-academical teachers of the required medical subjects be submitted by yourself, or by the Senatus, the Court will be prepared to consider the respective fitness of the persons so named to be authorised to hold medical classes for women who have, in this or former sessions, been matriculated students of the University, and also the conditions and regulations under which such classes should be held. It is, however, to be distinctly understood that such arrangements are not to be founded on as implying any right in women to obtain medical degrees, or as conferring any such right upon the students referred to."

My friends, as I say, congratulated me on this apparently important concession; but to make assurance doubly sure, I resolved to have absolute official confirmation of the apparent meaning of the Resolution, and therefore addressed another letter to the Court, in which, after thanking them for their apparent good intentions, I enquired whether I was correct in understanding—

"1. That, though you at present give us no pledge respecting our ultimate graduation, it is your intention to consider

the proposed extra-mural courses as 'qualifying' for graduation, and that you will take such measures as may be necessary to secure that they will be so accepted, if it is subsequently determined that the University has the power of granting degrees to women.

"2. That we shall be admitted in due course to the ordinary Professional Examinations, on presentation of the proper certificates of attendance on the said extra-mural classes."

In reply, I was calmly informed that the Court meant nothing of the kind; that they would not agree to count any classes we might take as qualifying, and that in fact they would not stir a finger in any way whatever to enable us to become legally qualified doctors, though they might, if we spent a good many years of labour and a quite unlimited sum of money in obtaining our education, give us at the end these wonderful Certificates of Proficiency, which would be worth exactly—Nothing!

What had been the meaning of the previous letter of apparent concession I confess myself quite at a loss to conceive. What advantage could accrue to us from submitting the names of extramural teachers to the Court, in which Professor Christison was the only medical man, I have never been able to guess, since the Court did not intend to take any means to make their teaching qualify for graduation, and we hardly needed its sanction in order to make private arrangements for non-qualifying instruction! One

is inclined to wonder whether the idea was that the University Court possessed some supernatural power, analogous to that supposed by certain churches to reside in episcopal laying on of hands, which would in a miraculous way benefit those lecturers whom they might "authorise" to teach us, though such teaching was to be given in place and manner wholly unconnected with that University with which I had supposed their functions to be exclusively connected. However, I am content to leave this among the unexplained mysteries, with very hearty thankfulness that, at least, by timely enquiries, we saved ourselves from a still more hopeless waste of time and money, which indeed we were on the point of incurring, in reliance on the good faith of the Court, and the apparent meaning of its mysterious Resolution.<sup>1</sup>

Having, however, at length arrived at a certainty that the Medical Faculty would rest with nothing short of our expulsion, if by any possibility they could attain that end; that the Senatus, though far more friendly, had not a sufficient majority of liberal votes to secure the permanent concession of our claims, however just, in the teeth of the strong medical opposition; and that the University Court would offer only such concessions as were quite valueless for our end, it became

<sup>1</sup> The correspondence above referred to is given in *Note T*.

clear that it was useless to prolong the series of supplications which had, for nearly a year, been addressed in vain to one after another of the the ruling powers of the University.

On the other hand, we had no less authority than that of the Lord Advocate of Scotland for believing that we were absolutely entitled to what we had so humbly solicited, and that a Court of law would quietly award to us what seemed unattainable by any other means; we had the very widely spread and daily increasing sympathy of the community at large, and received constant offers of help from friends of every kind, who were none the less inclined to befriend us because our opponents stood in high places, and were utterly relentless in their aims and reckless in their means. Under these circumstances, we have done the one thing that remained for us to do, we have brought an action of Declarator against the Senatus of the University;—praying to have it declared that the Senatus is bound, in some way or other, to enable us to complete our education, and to proceed to the medical degree which will entitle us to take place on the Medical Register among the legally qualified practitioners of medicine. By this action it will be decided,—once more to quote our great champion, the *Scotsman*,—whether, indeed, “a University can, with formal solemnity, and with the concurrence of all its



component parts, decree the admission of women to study for the profession of medicine, and then deny them access to those means by which alone they can enter that profession; whether, indeed, a University is absolved from all duties towards such of its matriculated students as may have the misfortune to be women. It will have to be decided whether any corporate body can make a contract of which all the obligations are on one side, and can exact fees and demand obedience to regulations, without in its turn incurring any responsibility; and can at pleasure finally send empty away those whose presence is inconvenient, without any regard to the money and time and labour which they have expended in simple reliance upon its good faith.”<sup>1</sup>

It is a very great satisfaction to me to find that some of the most illustrious members of the Senatus have expressed their own opinion on these points in the most emphatic way, for they have refused utterly to be parties to the defence of this action, and have entered on the Record a Minute from which I extract the following passage:—

“We dissent from and protest against the Resolution of the Senatus of March 27, 1872, to undertake the defence of the action. This we do for the following reasons:—(1.) Because we see no just cause for opposing the admission of women

<sup>1</sup> *Scotsman*, March 25, 1872.



to the study and practice of medicine, but on the contrary, consider that women who have honourably marked out such a course of life for themselves, ought to be forwarded and aided in their laudable endeavour as much as possible, by all who have the means, and especially by those having authority in any University or other Institution for Education; (2.) Because in particular, we feel such aid and encouragement, rather than opposition and discouragement, to be due from us to those women who have enrolled themselves in the University of Edinburgh, and we entirely concur with respect to them, in the desire expressed by Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, the Rector of the University, that they should obtain what they ask—namely, a complete medical education, crowned by a degree; (3.) Because we have seen no sufficient reason to doubt the legal and constitutional powers of our University, to make arrangements that would be perfectly adequate for the purpose, and we consider the public questioning of such powers, in present circumstances, by the University itself, or any of its component bodies, unnecessary, impolitic, and capable of being construed as a surrender of permanent rights and privileges of the University, in order to evade a temporary difficulty; (4.) Because, without pronouncing an opinion on the question now raised as to the legal rights which

the pursuers have acquired by matriculation in the University, admission already to certain examinations, or otherwise, to demand from the University continued medical instruction and the degree on due qualification, we yet believe that they have thereby, and by the general tenor of the proceedings, both of the Senatus and of the University Court in their case, hitherto acquired a moral right, and created a public expectation, which the University is bound to meet by the full exercise of its powers in their behalf, even should it be with some trouble; (5.) Because, with these convictions, and notwithstanding our utmost respect for those of our colleagues from whom we may have the misfortune to differ on the subject, we should individually feel ashamed of appearing as defenders in such an action, and should account any such public appearance by us in the character of opponents to women desiring to enter an honoured and useful profession, a matter to our discredit.”<sup>1</sup>

The following are the names of the six Professors who have taken this memorable stand:—John Hughes Bennett, M.D., Professor of Institutes of Medicine; David Masson, M.A., Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature; Henry Calderwood, LL.D., Professor of Moral Philosophy; James Lorimer, M.A., Professor of Public Law;

<sup>1</sup> *Scotsman*, May 7, 1872.

Archibald H. Charteris, D.D., Professor of Biblical Criticism and Biblical Antiquities; and William Ballantine Hodgson, LL.D., Professor of Political Economy.<sup>1</sup>

And so I have brought down as clearly and as briefly as I have been able the history of this great struggle to the present moment, for that it is a great struggle, and one that will astound most of those who may read these lines some thirty years hence I think no thoughtful person will deny.

I should like in conclusion to say a very few words on two only of the general questions which are bound up with the final solution of the problem of the Medical Education of Women.

And, first, as to the difficulties which are, or are not, inherent in the admission of women to a University, and especially in their studying in mixed classes. I believe most firmly that if, when we first applied for admission in Edinburgh, we had simply been given the ordinary tickets, and, if either no notice had been taken of our entering the classes, or the other students had

<sup>1</sup> Though a majority of the Senatus did decide to defend the action, I believe that it is understood that such decision did not imply, on the part of all who acquiesced in it, any moral conviction that we are not entitled to obtain the desired Declarator, since several other Professors appear to have agreed in feeling with the six dissentients, but to have acquiesced in the defence of the action for the sake of having a formal legal decision given on one side or the other.

been invited, as they were by Dr Alleyne Nicholson, to join in welcoming us to their midst, no difficulties would ever have arisen at all; or at least no difficulties but might have been most easily smoothed away by any manly teacher with a real reverence for his subject, and a belief in the profound purity of Science.<sup>1</sup> I am sure that in theory it is both possible and right for ladies and gentlemen to study in the same classes any and

<sup>1</sup> "I am bold enough to say that there is nothing in the art of healing which may not fitly be spoken of before an audience of both sexes, provided there be a generally good tone prevailing among them, and the lecturer be of a pure and manly spirit. Indeed, I will go farther, and say that his example in treating subjects of the kind incidental to his work with equal purity and courage will be far from the least valuable part of his teaching. It will bring home to the hearts of his hearers, with more force than any other argument, the truth that every creature, every ordinance of God, is good and pure."—*Medical Women*, by Rev. THOMAS MARKBY. London: Harrison.

Compare with the above the following statement made by an Edinburgh medical student in the columns of the *Scotsman*:—"I beg leave to relate what I myself listened to in a lecture-room of the University during the last summer session. On the occasion to which I refer, the Professor went a long way beyond the requirements of scientific teaching—into the regions of "spicy" but indelicate narrative—in order that he might appropriately introduce remarks to the following effect:—"There, gentlemen, I have minutely described to you those interesting incidents which it would have been impossible for me to notice if women were present; and I hope that we may be long spared the annoyance which their presence here would inflict upon us." The tempest of applause that followed showed only too well the harmony which existed between teacher and pupils on points that would have been far better left unnoticed."—*Scotsman*, December 26, 1870.

every subject which they need to learn, and I have very little doubt that this will ultimately be the usual arrangement as civilization advances. But I am equally certain that boys of a low social class, of small mental calibre, and no moral training, are utterly unfit to be admitted to a mixed class, and I confess that I was most painfully surprised in Edinburgh to find how large a number there are of medical students who come under this description. I had honestly supposed, as I wrote three years ago, that ladies need fear no discomfort in an ordinary medical class, as "the majority of the students would always be gentlemen."<sup>1</sup> I regret that on this point I have been compelled somewhat to modify my opinion, though I would fain hope that the circumstances which obliged me to do so were to a great extent exceptional and local.<sup>2</sup> Nor do I think it possible that a mixed class can be satisfactorily conducted by any man who is not capable of inspiring his students with a reverence for purity, or who does not naturally teach them alike by example and precept, that the fear of competition is essentially low and mean, and that the acme of degradation

<sup>1</sup> See "*Medicine as a Profession for Women*," p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> "The truth is, a class of young men, inferior socially to their predecessors of ten years ago, now resort to the Edinburgh School, which has lost much of its attractiveness now that London and other seats of learning are so well appointed and so efficiently worked."—*Lancet*, February 17, 1872.

is reached when strength of any kind is used for the injury or annoyance of the weaker or less protected; and, this being so, I acquiesce very heartily in the decision that, at present, wherever professors and students think it necessary, women shall be taught medicine only in separate classes, though I hope, even in my life-time, to see the day when such regulations are no longer required, because students and teachers alike have risen to a higher moral level.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime, let us but be granted permission to acquire our knowledge in separate classes, at whatever cost, and the authorities may be very sure that we shall not trouble them with requests again to be subjected to the unsavoury companionship of which we had such full experience in 1870-71.<sup>2</sup>

And, lastly, with regard to future legislation respecting medical practice, I would say but one word. It is clearly right that, for the protection of the helpless and ignorant, the State should take means to distinguish between competent and incompetent practitioners of medicine, and I hope that women as well as men will always be required very thoroughly to prove their fitness for practice before they are allowed to undertake it, at

<sup>1</sup> "*Mundis omnia munda!* Neither ladies nor lecturers are conscious of 'indelicacy' or 'breach of decorum.' Can it be that the unruly students are 'nice' only upon Dean Swift's principle, because they are 'nasty?'"—*Globe*, Dec. 10, 1870.

<sup>2</sup> See *Note U*.



least under national sanction. But it is not in the least for the good of the nation that any monopoly should be encouraged, whether in matters of teaching, examination, or practice. Is it not simply shameful that all that I have now been relating should be *possible* in this country, and possible because of a law which appoints but one door to the medical profession,—that of Registration,—limits Registration to those who have passed through certain definite Schools, and satisfied certain definite Boards, and yet allows those Schools and Boards absolute power to shut their doors on one-half of the human race, and that even in the case of Universities largely subsidised from public funds, and at a time when the public are positively clamouring for women doctors for women? We can see plainly enough why it is (in the lowest sense) the interest of medical men to exclude women from their profession,—though, thank God, there are hundreds of medical men who would scorn to put their interests in one scale when justice weighed down the other,—but it is *not* the interest of the public or of the nation to sanction any such monopoly;<sup>1</sup>—it is their inte-

<sup>1</sup> “The wrong done to individuals by denying them the training necessary to the pursuit of a branch of knowledge, and the practice of an art for which they may have a special taste and capacity, is very great; and it involves a wrong not less signal to society, in limiting the sources whence good may come to it.”

*Daily News*, Nov. 1, 1871.



rest to throw open the gates of competition as widely as possible, insisting only on a uniform standard of attainment for all, of either sex, who would enter them; for, by thus increasing the supply of really competent doctors, they give themselves the best possible opportunities of selection; and, as I have pointed out elsewhere, they double the chances of growth and advance in the fields of medical science.

When this momentous question again comes before Parliament, I trust that the issues involved will be fully realised; and that, while providing for the most stringent examination of every candidate, no arbitrary barrier will be placed in the way of any, and no regulations be allowed to stand which militate against the good old English motto for all,—a Fair Field and no Favour!

---

## NOTES.

---

### NOTE A, p. 11.

THE following are a few only out of many indications of the existence of the painful feeling alluded to in the text. The reader will hardly need to be reminded that this is especially a subject respecting which a maximum of feeling may well exist with a minimum of expression, for hardly anything but a sense of duty would make a woman write on such a question to the newspapers.

“ But there remains to be considered the modesty and delicacy of the patients,—a question hardly yet mooted ; these poor women having, I suppose, too much of the reality to raise the point. It cannot be denied that at least one-half of the patients of medical men are women, or that usually (from natural causes) they require medical services more certainly and frequently than men ; and operations delicate or indelicate, so called, must be performed, questions, delicate or indelicate, must be asked, and answered too, if not by the patient herself, by the nurse, who, I believe, is usually a woman.

“ There is much reason to believe that many women, either owing to the nature of their malady, or from constitutional nervousness or reserve, never avail themselves of the services of a medical man without reluctance. To them it is always a painful effort—the twentieth time as much as the first. It would, I think, be odd if something of this kind were not felt very strongly by every woman on some occasions, and I have seen very experienced mothers quite distressed, if by any chance, they were deprived of the assistance of ‘the doctor they were used to.’ The wives of medical men have told me that it was their one comfort to feel that in their hour of suffering only their own husband and a good nurse need be with them. I think this is not unnatural.”—Letter by “MEDICUS,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, May 11, 1870.

“ I happened to be speaking to a young shopwoman—a total stranger to me—and in the course of conversation advised her to seek medical advice, when she replied, with a sudden gush of tears in her eyes, that she *had* been in the Infirmary, in Dr Matthews Duncan’s wards for a fortnight, and had during that time suffered so much from the constant presence of crowds of male students during certain inevitable but most unpleasant examinations of her person, that, as she herself forcibly expressed it, ‘it almost drove me mad.’”—*Daily Review*, Nov. 18, 1870.

“ SIR,—A new obstacle has been thrown in the way of women acquiring a knowledge of the medical profession. The special obstacle at present is injury to the delicacy of mind of the male students. This delicacy, if real, must be a serious drawback to the proper exercise of their profession in after life. That it is so, many a suffering woman knows.

“ The question, however, arises—which evil is the greater,—that five hundred youths, in full health and vigour, should be made a little uncomfortable by the presence of seven women, or that seven times five hundred women, unnerved by suffering, should be subjected to the very trial they shrink from.

“ That women do truly shrink from this trial, the number of wretched, broken-down sufferers from chronic disease but too clearly proves. It is only when racked by constant pain that a woman’s natural delicacy at last gives way, often only to hear said the words (how bitter they are !) ‘too late.’

“ The returns of the Registrar-General could easily prove the vast sacrifice of life, did delicacy not again step in with ‘consumption and liver complaints,’ as more euphonious terms for the real disorders of which these are the mere after-results.

“ This objection, looked at fairly, is a case of the delicacy of five hundred men *versus* that of all suffering women.

"I leave the fathers and husbands of Edinburgh to judge righteous judgment thereon.—I am, &c., A SUFFERER."—*Scotsman*, November 21, 1880.

"I think most thoughtful women will bear testimony to the amount of preventible suffering that passes unaided, because the natural sensibilities of women prevent their resorting with comfort to treatment by medical men for certain diseases. I can count almost by dozens the cases which have come under my personal observation of health ruined, and life's pleasures and usefulness alike lost with it, because young girls (and sometimes older women too) will not submit to receive from a man, however respected, the personal examination and treatment necessary for their restoration, and because no woman's skill has been at their command. Let your readers divest themselves for a moment of conventional habits of thought, and inquire what would be their instinctive opinion of the existing custom which compels one sex to be dependent on the other for medical treatment of the most delicate kind. Imagine the case reversed. If henceforth women alone were to attend on men, what would the world say to that? At any rate, is it not time that women should at least be allowed a choice in this matter? And if this be so, it is clear that some women must be thoroughly educated for the medical profession. . . .—I am, &c., A WOMAN."

*Manchester Examiner and Times*, November 30, 1870.

"Mention is rarely made of the many women who are waiting longingly for the time when it will be possible for them to consult doctors of their own sex—when they will no longer be forced, at the risk of their health, and perhaps life, to consult men in circumstances under which their natural feelings of delicacy revolt; but I am sure that the number of these is not small, and long suffering as they have hitherto been, their voice in time will make itself heard, if all other monitions are disregarded. I am, &c., A WOMAN WHO DESIRES A WOMAN DOCTOR."—*Daily Review*, Dec. 22, 1870.

"We often hear of the possible dislike of male patients to the presence of lady students, but let us also give the weaker sex a little credit for these same much-talked-of feelings of modesty and decency. Many a time have I stood by the bedside of poor girls who seemed ready to sink under the shame of being exposed before a number of young men—a feeling which could not be overcome even by the agony of the operations. . . . A MEDICAL STUDENT."—*Scotsman*, Dec. 26, 1870.

EDINBURGH, Dec. 23, 1870.

"SIR,—In the present controversy regarding the extension to women of facilities for obtaining a complete medical education, it is reiterated on one side that there is a no demand among women themselves for doctors of their own sex. In visiting a district of nine families in a poor quarter of the Old Town, inhabited principally by Irish, I found four women seriously out of health; not so seriously, however, but that they might have been cured by timely medical advice. I urged each of them more than once to go to the Dispensary, but all persistently refused, each of them saying in different words that, if ladies were doctors, as they had heard they were in some places, they would have had medical advice long before. The feelings of these poor women were so strong on the subject that I found it was useless to urge them further. It seems only just and reasonable that qualified female medical attendants should be within the reach of those who either have a strong preference for it, or who will not avail themselves of any other.—I am, &c., A DISTRICT VISITOR."

*Scotsman*, Dec. 29, 1870.

"As one who, for a short time, was a patient under a late very eminent doctor of Edinburgh, I say that I believe nothing would again induce me to do what I then did, in ignorance of what was before me. The anguish of mind suffered silently by women in such circumstances is not to be described, and is likely seriously to influence the effect of the medical treatment. It is surely time for men to cease to speak of what *women feel* in this matter. It is impossible for them to know what women will never tell them—the unwillingness, the delay, often *too long*, which precedes their stammered request for advice. What women need is, that some of their own sex should have the power of qualifying themselves to act as their advisers. Who has a right to say they shall not, when the voice of their countrywomen calls on them to do it?—I am, &c., AN ENGLISHWOMAN."—*Scotsman*, June 6, 1872.

#### NOTE B, p. 37.

In answer to the sufficiently arrogant enquiry from Dr Henry Bennet,—"What right have women to claim mental equality with men?"—I

addressed the following letter to the *Lancet*, and as it seems to me to sum up our position fairly enough, I here reprint it.

EDINBURGH, June 21st, 1870.

"SIR,—I see in your columns of June 18th a letter on 'Women as Practitioners of Midwifery,' and appeal to your sense of fairness to allow me a fourth part of the space it occupied, for a few words in reply.

"It is hardly worth while to discuss the early part of the letter, as the second paragraph sufficiently disposes of the first. After saying that women are 'sexually, constitutionally, and mentally unfitted for hard and incessant toil,' Dr Bennet goes on to propose to make over to them, as their sole share of the medical profession, what he himself well describes as its 'most arduous, most wearing, and most unremunerative duties.' In the last adjective seems really to lie the whole suitability of the division of labour, according to the writer's view. He evidently thinks that women's capabilities are nicely graduated to fit 'half-guinea or guinea midwifery cases,' and that all patients paying a larger sum, of necessity need the superior powers of the 'male mind of the Caucasian race.' Let whatever is well paid be left to the man, then chivalrously abandon the 'badly remunerated' work to the woman. This is the genuine view of a true trades-unionist. It is well for once to hear it candidly stated. As I trust the majority of medical men would be ashamed of avowing such a principle, and as I am sure it would be indignantly disavowed by the general public, I do not care to say more on this point.

"But when Dr Bennet proceeds to dogmatise about what he calls our claim to 'mental equality,' he comes to a different and much more important question. I, for one, do not care in the least either to claim or disown such equality, nor do I see that it is at all essential to the real question at issue. Allow me to state in a few words the position that I, and, as I believe, most of my fellow students take. We say to the authorities of the medical profession, 'State clearly what attainments you consider necessary for a medical practitioner; fix your standard where you please, but define it plainly; put no obstacles in our way; either afford us access to the ordinary means of medical education, or do not exact that we shall use your special methods; in either case subject us ultimately to exactly the ordinary examinations and tests, and, if we fail to acquit ourselves as well as your average students, reject us; if, on the contrary, in spite of all difficulties, we reach your standard, and fulfil all your requirements, the question of 'mental equality' is practically settled, so far as it concerns our case; give us then the ordinary medical license or diploma, and leave the question of our ultimate success or failure in practice to be decided by ourselves and the public.' This is our position, and I appeal, not to the chivalry, but to the justice, of the medical profession, to show us that it is untenable, or else to concede it at once.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant, SOPHIA JEX-BLAKE."

*Lancet*, July 9, 1870.

---

#### NOTE C, p. 46.

The statement in the text was made the subject of a newspaper controversy; and I append the following very valuable evidence which was thus elicited in support of my assertion:—

"SIR,—Permit me to bear my testimony to the state of the facts on this question as far as English convents are concerned. I was for some years medical attendant to a Franciscan convent, and was frequently consulted by the nuns. They were examined and treated like other patients, except where certain maladies were concerned, and then they suffered in silence, or with such relief as could be given by medicines, after a diagnosis founded on questions and general symptoms only. I especially remember two cases. . . . In neither of these any examination was permitted, or any surgical treatment regarded as a possibility, in spite of all the representations I could make, and although, I believe, I possessed the full confidence of the patients and of the Superior. Whether a female surgeon would have been allowed to examine and operate I cannot say.—I am, Sir, yours, &c., F.R.C.S."—*Lancet*, May 18, 1872.

"SIR,—Kindly permit me to say a few words with regard to Miss Jex-Blake's statement, that very many women, and in particular, nuns, would certainly show a preference for the medical and surgical aid of one of their own sex, were any choice possible to them. As being myself a Catholic, and having many near relatives nuns, I can most confidently confirm this assertion.

"I have known, for many years, and in the closest intimacy, ladies, members of various religious orders, in this country and in France, and I am quite aware that recourse to male medical advice, in peculiar cases, is looked upon in religious houses as something much more painful than any physical suffering, or even death.

"My father was medical attendant to a convent of English nuns, and I think I may safely say that any advice given to nuns in such cases was entirely at second hand, the doctor's wife being the favourite resource in these emergencies. . . .

"Then, again, how can any man, medical or not, know what agonies of shame and outraged modesty women can and do undergo, when submitting to male medical and surgical treatment? How many women cannot overcome their repugnance, and die with their special ailments unsuspected, or discovered too late? On the other hand, how many women are at great pains to *conceal* the shrinking which they feel when exposing their peculiar ailments to even a long-known and valued medical man? Why should we have these added to our other unavoidable sufferings? The reality of these feelings is, I am certain, within the personal knowledge of every one of your female readers. No one wishes to deny modesty to the stronger sex; but let us suppose them *compelled* to reveal all their physical ills to *women*—how would they feel?—I am, &c., A CATHOLIC WIFE AND MOTHER."—*Scotsman*, May 27, 1872.

#### NOTE D, p. 49.

While reviewing the above for the press (May 1872), the following lines came under my notice, and I think them the more suitable to quote as they are from the pen of a woman who has never herself shown the least inclination for the study of medicine, and who, therefore, speaks entirely from the abstract point of view:—

"Nothing will ever make me believe that God meant men to be the ordinary physicians of women and babies. A few masculine experts might be tolerated in special institutions, so that cases of peculiar danger and difficulty might not be left, as they are now, to the necessarily one-sided treatment of a single sex; but, in general, if ever a created being was conspicuously and intolerably out of his natural sphere, it is, in my opinion, the male doctor in the apartment of the lying-in woman; and I think our sex is really guilty, in the first place, that it ever allowed man to appear there; and, in the second, that it does not insist upon educating women of character and intelligence and social position for that post.

"Indeed, common delicacy would seem to demand that all the special diseases of women should be treated principally by women; but this aside, and speaking from common sense only, men may be as scientific as they please,—it is plain that thoroughly to know the women's organism, what is good for it and what evil, and how it can best be cured when it is disordered, one must be one's self a woman. It only proves how much unworthy passion and prejudice the great doctors allow to intrude into their adoration of 'pure science' and boasted love of humanity, that, instead of being eager to enlist the feminine intuitions and investigations in this great cause, as their best chance of arriving at truth, they are actually enacting the ignoble part of churls and misers, if not of quacks. For are they not well enough aware that often their women patients are so utterly beyond them that they do not know what to do with them! The diseases of the age are nervous diseases, and women are growing more nervously high-strung and uncontrollable every day, yet the doctors stand helplessly by and cannot stop it. When, however, there shall be a school of doctresses of high culture and thorough medical education going in and out among the sex with the proper medical authority, they will see, and will be able to prevent, much of the moral and physical neglect and imprudence which, now unchecked in school and home, make such havoc of the vital forces of the present generation."

"*Co-operative Housekeeping*," by Mrs C. F. Pierce.

#### NOTE E, p. 53.

For the edification of the next generation, to whom all this bigotry will probably appear almost incredible, I subjoin the passage alluded to in the text. I am sorry to say it is by no means the worst I might have quoted from the same paper.



"For ourselves, we hold that the admission of women into the ranks of medicine is an egregious blunder, derogatory to the status and character of the female sex, and likely to be injurious, in the highest degree, to the interests and public estimation of the profession which they seek to invade.

"By insisting on the attendance of all students at the public-class delivery of anatomical lectures, and in the public-class dissecting-room, the only possible guarantee of uniformity of teaching will be obtained, and, at the same time, a difficulty will be placed in the way of female intrusion which it will not be easy for women of character, and clearly none else are eligible, to surmount. We hope, however, that the Court of Examiners will not stop with the erection of the barrier we suggest, but that they will distinctly refuse to admit any female candidate to examination unless compelled by a legal decision from the bench; and we also hope that they will be supported in such refusal by the Master and Wardens of the Society, as well as by the profession out of doors."—*Medical Times and Gazette*, Feb. 27, 1867.

---

#### NOTE F, p. 56.

Since the first admission of women to the University of Zurich in 1867, five women have taken degrees there in Medicine, but none at present in any other Faculty. During the present year (1872) there are at Zurich no less than 51 women studying in the Medical Faculty, and 12 in that of Arts.

---

#### NOTE G, p. 62.

"Now at last the vexed question of mixed classes will be solved, and there can be no doubt in the minds of those who have ever been engaged in scientific study of the favourable result to be expected. It is curious to note in the history of the present movement how, one after another, old objections have vanished, and old arguments have become no longer available. It is pretty certain that this last, and perhaps greatest, stumbling-block to the minds of many will also disappear when it is seen with what beneficial results the system of mixed education is attended. And one great advantage to be expected is the benefit that will accrue from the higher reverence for science that must necessarily result from such a system. Once admit the impropriety of teaching men and women together, and you tax science with impurity; and while such a feeling is entertained (and it surely must be lurking in the minds of those who oppose mixed classes), the study of science, if not absolutely injurious, must be robbed of great part of its power to elevate the mind and heart. . . . Science has had to fight many a hard battle. For a long time it was asserted that science and religion were antagonistic to each other, but a Faraday has shown us how the two may go hand in hand, each helping and supporting the other. Last April we were told that the study of science was linked with impurity of thought, and we look upon the present action of the Lecturers of Surgeons' Hall as a result of the indignant protest which every pure-minded man of science must have longed to utter against such a wholly false and calumnious statement. It is as the champions of science rather than of medical women that these gentlemen must be regarded. In any case science would have passed through this last attack, as she has ever done through all similar attacks, victorious and unscathed and unrestrained in her power to bless and help mankind; but the lecturers of our city have the no small honour of having publicly testified their unqualified conviction of the entire purity of all scientific knowledge and research. . . . Now that the Lecturers of Surgeons' Hall have come forward as a body to affirm the same principle, we may indeed hail the beginning of the end, and may trust soon to see the day when the man who condemns the teaching of science to classes of both men and women will simply stand self-condemned as wanting alike in true scientific spirit and in genuine purity of mind."

*Daily Review*, July 11, 1870.

"It seems that two ladies have this week applied for admission as students to St Thomas's Hospital in London, and a medical contemporary makes this fact the excuse for a fresh onslaught on all women who may, for the sake of a thorough medical education, wish to enter the existing schools which at present possess a legal monopoly of that education. The editorial delicacy declares—'that any women should be found who desire such fellowship in study is to us inexplicable.' This ill-bred sneer directed against ladies as medical students is peculiarly ill-timed at a moment when the medical profession are loudly calling on women to come to their aid in the military hospitals of the Continent, teeming, as we know them to be, with horrors which

certainly far surpass any that ladies are likely to encounter in their ordinary course of study, and which must inevitably be witnessed in company 'with persons of the opposite sex.' Certainly no reasons of delicacy at least can justify women's co-operation in the one case, and yet demand their exclusion in the other.

"The truth is, that of course a certain conventional standard of propriety exists, which it is well and desirable to maintain under ordinary circumstances, as between persons of opposite sexes; and this rule forbids the casual discussion of most medical and some scientific subjects in chance audiences composed of ladies and gentlemen. But a higher law remains behind—*Salus populi suprema Lex*. If perishing humanity cries aloud for help, as during the present fearful struggle, we should think little of the pretended delicacy which could hinder either men or women from flocking to the rescue, and hid them pause, 'in the name of modesty,' to consider whether, under these circumstances, drawing-room proprieties would always be observed. So, too, when the question really at stake is whether all women are to be deprived of the medical services of their own sex, for fear some men's 'delicacy' should be shocked by the idea of their studying in the ordinary class-rooms, it is time to protest that, true science being of necessity impersonal, is absolutely pure. We remember that, when an attack was made on Dr Alleyne Nicholson a month or two ago, for admitting women to his classes, he replied in a letter to one of the medical papers, that he laid 'small stress on the purity or modesty of those who find themselves able to extract food for improper feelings from a purely scientific subject,' and we confess that we are inclined to share his opinion, which we suspect will be that of all the noblest and most enlightened men of science.

"A great deal of nonsense has been talked with reference to 'mixed classes,' and as it is probable that the subject may come up again in a practical shape before long, it is as well to say a few plain words about the question at issue. First of all, let it be clearly established that medicine cannot be taught advantageously, nor indeed legally, in holes and corners to half-a-dozen or even a dozen students. In the very paper in which appeared the offensive paragraph to which we have alluded, we find a plea for the consolidation of the London Medical Schools into a smaller number, because 'there are not students enough' to support them all in perfection, and because two or three well-paid lecturers with abundant apparatus could teach to far greater advantage than twice or thrice that number under present circumstances. If this is true where there are at least several hundred students to be divided among the eleven existing schools, how palpably absurd it is to recommend our countrywomen to 'have separate places of medical education and examination,' when the whole number of ladies desiring to study medicine in England may perhaps number a score! Our own University professors tell us plainly that separate classes for half-a-dozen ladies are an impossibility, and the practical experience of Surgeons' Hall, pointing in the same direction, evidently guided its lecturers in their recent vote. The broad fact, therefore, must be accepted, that either the door must be shut in the face of all women, and that at a moment when some of them are proving to a demonstration their remarkable fitness to enter it, or they must be allowed, as they long ago requested, to enter quietly and without remark, and take their places with other students, to learn the common lessons equally necessary for all.

"And, after all, what are the arguments on the other side? We are told oracularly that what is proposed is *contra bonos mores*, and are warned with equal solemnity of the imminent downfall of any school that dares to break loose from the bondage of Medical Trades-Unionism and afford to women exactly the same advantages as to other students. We do not wish to speak solely, or even chiefly, in the interests of women; we wish to look at the question broadly and with a view to the possible moral results to the public at large; and from this point of view we cannot but feel that the more general association of the sexes in earnest labour, and especially in scientific and medical study, may be of the greatest importance to the community. Though the traditions of the Bob Sawyer period are happily passing away, there yet seems to linger an idea that medical students as a rule adopt a lower moral standard and are of a more generally reckless character than those studying for other professions. If this is so, may not the explanation be found in the sort of half-expressed idea that seems prevalent in so many people's minds that there is in medical study something which, if not actually improper and indelicate, certainly tends that way, and had better be ignored as much as possible—something at least which the average public would probably sum up as 'rather nasty.' We believe that it is on this popular idea—which every true physician would indignantly disclaim—that the opponents of women's education trade when they try to enlist public feeling against mixed classes. They talk in a vague and very offensive way about certain studies which form a necessary part of medical education, and not being themselves capable of seeing the true dignity and profound purity of all science, especially when pur-



sued with the aim of succouring pain and combating disease, they manage too often to impress the general public with the idea that by sanctioning the joint study of medicine by men and women the said public would commit itself to some shocking impropriety, all the more awful for being quite indefinite—*omne ignotum pro magnifico*. It is probable that this sort of vague terror is, in fact, the best weapon yet forged against women students, but, like many another terror, it is one that vanishes in the clear daylight. Let it once be broadly understood that science has no hidden horrors, that the study of God's works can never be otherwise than healthful and beautiful to every student who brings to their contemplation a clear eye and a clean hand, and this weapon of darkness will be shivered for ever. We believe, indeed, that nothing could be more desirable for the average young medical student than to find himself associated in daily study with women whom he cannot but respect; nothing more calculated to give him an earnest sense alike of the dignity and of the purity of his vocation than to labour in it side by side with ladies whose character and whose motives are to him a daily reminder that he and they alike are set apart both as the votaries of science and the ministers of suffering humanity."

*Daily Review*, October 11, 1870.

---

#### NOTE H, p. 78.

The following extracts will show the position and opportunities of study enjoyed by lady probationers and nurses at London hospitals. The first is taken from a letter written by a lady who was herself trained as a surgical nurse in a hospital. She writes :—

"In the ordinary course of the day's work, I went round the wards with the visiting surgeons, and at the same time as the students, and, in fact, I should think, enjoyed exactly the same opportunities that people profess to be so much shocked at your desiring to obtain in Edinburgh. Part of my time was spent in study in the female and part in the male wards; and I never found either students or patients see anything at all exceptional in my presence in the latter, though I often had to perform services for the male patients which would never be expected of you as students. When any patients from my wards went into the theatre, for operation, I, as a matter of course, accompanied them, and was present during the operation, standing often quite near the surgeon, however many students might be thereat the time. I was, therefore, constantly associated with the students in the hospital work, as were all the other ladies studying in the same capacity, and I never saw any difficulty in this arrangement, nor had any reason to suppose that the students did."

Thinking that a lady's evidence might be challenged on this matter, I wrote to one of the principal surgeons of the Middlesex Hospital for confirmation of her statement, and received the following reply :—

"Nurses and lady probationers are present in the wards, and attend the surgeons in their visits, and are present at operations. The students never, so far as I observed, took any notice of the question as to whether the female attendants in the wards were ladies or ordinary nurses—never, in short, troubled themselves about them."

While on the subject, I will quote an extract from a letter received from Dr Elizabeth Blackwell, the first Englishwoman who ever received a medical degree. She says :—

"I walked St Bartholomew's Hospital in the years 1850-51. I received permission to do so from the Governors, and was received by the medical faculty with a friendly courtesy for which I shall always be grateful. I always went round with the class of students during the physician's visits. The medical class numbered about thirty students. I spent between five and six hours daily in recording and studying cases. During the visits, I never received anything but courtesy from the students. When studying in the wards, I received much kind assistance from the clinical clerks and dressers. While leaving the hospital the treasurer said to me—'When we gave you permission to enter, we thought we were doing something so unusual that we were rather anxious about the result, but, really, everything has gone on so quietly, so exactly as usual, that we had almost forgotten you were here.' . . . My observation of mixed study is, that a small select number of women may join an ordinary school with little difficulty, and that there is even less trouble in arranging hospital visiting than class-room instruction."

The last case that I will cite with reference to hospital instruction is that of Mrs Leggett, who is now attending as a regular student in Steevens' Hospital, Dublin, and who writes :—

"I had the unanimous consent of the Board to pursue my medical studies in Steevens' Hospital. As to the medical students, they are always civil. Dr Macnamara, President of the College of Physicians of Ireland, said it was his opinion that the presence of ladies would refine the classes."

With reference to the attendance of this lady, Dr Hamilton, Medical Secretary of Steevens' Hospital, writes—

"So far as we have gone, we find the education of mixed classes in one hospital to work very well."

#### NOTE I, p. 93.

The following are a few only out of very many expressions of public indignation at this episode :—

"One of the most singular of University 'scandals' comes to us from decorous Edinburgh. True, it is the very antithesis of cases—such as are only too familiar on this side the Border—of debauchery at night, and a scene in court next morning, but it is not a whit the less discreditable. The transgressor, however, is not a college student, but a college professor. The case admits of, we might say demands, historic treatment. Some years ago, Dr Hope, then Professor of Chemistry in the University, gave a course of lectures to ladies—at that time quite an experiment—and was so much gratified, we are told, at their popularity, that he devoted the proceeds, amounting to about a thousand pounds, to found what have since been termed Hope Scholarships. We now get to a very modern period indeed. The Chemistry class during last winter numbered no less than 236 students, of whom six were ladies, who had been admitted to study in the medical classes, 'in accordance with the decision of the University authorities at the beginning of the session.' A few days ago the results of the examination were made known, when it appeared that one lady, Miss Mary Edith Pechey, was in the proud position of third in the list of honours, and another lady, Miss Sophia Jex-Blake, tenth. Miss Pechey's success is the more gratifying, inasmuch as she is a fresh student, while the two gentlemen who stood above her on the list have attended a previous course of lectures. Dr Crum Brown, the Professor of Chemistry, in announcing the results, took upon himself to say that he should pass over Miss Pechey and award one of the Hope Scholarships to the next male on the list. This is directly in the teeth of the regulations made and provided for his guidance; according to which these scholarships are to be awarded to 'the four students whose names stand highest in the chemistry class for the session.' We understand that Professor Crum Brown justifies his action on the ignoble plea 'that the women now studying in the University class do not form part of the University class, on account of their meeting at a different hour.' Great indignation has very naturally been excited in Edinburgh by this incident, and the question has been referred to the Senate of the University, who, though a corporate body, will, we hope, act as honourable men."—*Manchester Examiner and Times*, April 6, 1870.

"The inferior sex has always been a nuisance and a bore. A wise old Sultan of Turkey used to ask, whenever anything went wrong, 'Who was she?' One day while the Sultan was making an addition to his palace (as is the habit of Sultans), a labourer fell from the scaffold and was killed. 'Who was she?' said the Sultan at once. The inferior sex is always plaguing the superior sex in one way or another, and now it seems that the inferior sex are winning *our* scholarships over our most sacred heads. This is a matter which must be looked to. We will stand a great deal, but this is going a little too far; we must agitate; members must pledge themselves on the hustings to a bill providing that any one of the inferior sex who gains a scholarship must not have it at any price whatever, or we shall all be undone. We must have an Act for the repression of women; we are very sorry to say such terrible words, but the thing must be done: it had better be done at once while the nation is in a mood for repression. Particular cases thrust themselves prominently on the national mind, and cause legislation: the Coercion Bill for Ireland was thrust on to an unwilling Government by a very few of the later agrarian outrages: the last ounce breaks the camel's back. If Miss Edith Pechey chooses to come in *facile princeps* at the head of the Chemistry Class of her year, we of the superior sex must really look to ourselves. We have the power of legislation still left in our hands, and we warn such ladies as

Miss Edith Pechey and Miss Jex-Blake that we shall use it. We must have a bill for the protection of the superior sex.

"We feel sure that the ladies will forgive joking about a very absurd matter. Ladies should surely understand the power of ridicule. We think that the '*reductio ad absurdum*' in this matter is the proper line of argument. The facts of the case seem to be simply these:—After protracted delays and much discussion, the University authorities last autumn vouchsafed to ladies the permission to enter the College as matriculated medical students, with the single restriction that their instruction should be conducted in separate classes. On referring to the minutes of the University Court, we find the following definition of the position to be taken by the new students:—"All women attending such classes shall be subject to all the regulations now, or at any future time, in force in the University as to the matriculation of students, their attendance on classes, examination, or otherwise." We turn to the Calendar to see what are the 'regulations in force in the University' as to examination in chemistry, and we find at page 84 the following:—"The class honours are determined by means of written examinations held during the session. The four students who have received the highest marks are entitled to have the Hope Scholarships to the laboratory of the University." The ladies accepted in good faith the regulations of the University, and, fired by a laudable ambition to prove themselves worthy of the privileges now accorded for the first time to women, worked with an assiduity that may be guessed when it is found that one of them, Miss Pechey, actually gained the highest number of marks awarded during the session to any student attending chemistry for the first time, though she was excelled (by one and two marks respectively) by two gentlemen who had gone through a previous course of lectures. But when the day arrived which was to reward all this work, the Professor announced, without, as it seemed to us, a shadow of justification, that the four scholarships would be given, *not* according to the University regulations to the four students '*entitled to them*,' but to the three gentlemen who had won the first, second, and fourth places, and to the one who stood fifth on the list, this last having earned a most honourable place by his talents and industry, but *not* the Hope Scholarship, though now he has, of course, the right to claim free admission to the laboratory as it has been promised to him. This, then, is a University episode. Six students are admitted on the distinct understanding that, with one exception (dictated, as we think, by a whimsical propriety), they are to be 'subject to the regulations of the University'; no hint is given to them that this statement is analogous to the one which pithily describes women's political condition in England—"He means *she* when it's a question of hanging; he doesn't mean *she* when it's a question of voting." The ladies are encouraged to exert their utmost power for work; when the rewards are to come, and it is found that one of them has earned one of the highest honours attainable by the class, she is calmly informed that that honour has been given to somebody else! A neater instance of generosity with other people's property it has never been our lot to witness, and we don't care how long it is before we repeat the experience.

"The only excuse that we can with the utmost stretch of charity imagine in this case would be that Dr Crum Brown thought some difficulty might arise respecting Miss Pechey's use of the scholarship (which gives free admittance to the laboratory), under the restrictions now imposed on women by the University Court—for we will not suppose for a moment that the Professor could himself wish to impede the further progress of a student of such merit. But if such difficulty occurred it might be an excellent reason for relaxing those restrictions, when they are seen to deprive a student of the full reward of her past work, and at the same time to prevent her prosecuting further the study in which she has so distinguished herself; but we are quite at a loss to see how any legitimate argument can be drawn thence to justify Dr Brown in laying violent hands on a scholarship which has been fairly earned by one person for the purpose of presenting it to another. It is possible that A's circumstances may prevent his deriving full benefit from some of his possessions, but the law would hardly consider this fact a valid reason for B's 'annexing' the said possession for the benefit of C. If Dr Brown chooses to admit a fifth student to the laboratory he can of course do so, but unless we are greatly mistaken he will probably be informed by the Law Faculty (whom he might previously have consulted with advantage) that neither he nor any other person can alter the fact that Miss Pechey and no one else is third Hope Scholar."—*Daily Review*, April 1, 1870.

"A very odd and very gross injustice appears to have been attempted in the University of Edinburgh. In that University the lady medical students are taught in a separate class,—not from any wish of their own, but through the delicacy of the professors. In the chemical class, Miss Edith Pechey gained the third place, and was first of the first year's students, the two men who surpassed her having attended the class before. The four students who get the highest marks receive four Hope Scholarships,—scholar-

ships founded by Dr Hope some years ago out of the proceeds of a very popular *ladies' class* of chemistry, with the success of which he had been much gratified. Yet Miss Edith Pecbey was held by the professor not to be entitled to the third scholarship, and omitting her name, he included two men whom she had beaten, and who stood fourth and fifth in the examination, his excuse being that the women are not part of the University class, because they are separately taught. Yet Dr Crum Brown awards Miss Pecbey a bronze medal, to which only members of the University class are said to be entitled! It is quite clear that such a decision cannot stand. To make women attend a separate class, for which they have to pay, we believe, much higher fees than usual, and then argue that they are out of the pale of competition because they do so, is, indeed, too like the captious schoolmaster who first sent a boy into the corner and then whipped him for not being in his seat."—*Spectator*, April 9, 1870.

"The letter Miss Pecbey addressed to us the other day was written in an admirable spirit, and must insure her the hearty sympathy of all, whatever their opinions upon the points in question. She has done her sex a service, not only by vindicating their intellectual ability in an open competition with men, but still more by the temper and courtesy with which she meets her disappointments. Under any view of the main question, her case is a hard one, for it is clear both she and the other lady students were led to attend the classes under the misapprehension of the privileges to which they were admissible. If the University intended to exclude ladies from the pecuniary advantages usually attached to successful study, the intention should have been clearly announced. Miss Pecbey, in the spirit of a true student, says she is abundantly repaid for her exertions by the knowledge she has acquired; but it is none the less hard that, having been encouraged to labour for a coveted reward, and having fairly won it, she should be disqualified by a restriction of which no warning had been given her."—*Times*, April 25, 1870.

"There are probably few persons who did not learn with regret the decision of the Edinburgh Senatus in respect of the Hope Scholarships. It is not pleasant that such a story of, at least, seeming injustice should circulate through foreign universities, to the discredit of our own, for there cannot be much doubt as to the view that will be taken of the case by those nations—now forming the majority in Europe—who have admitted women to their medical colleges on terms of exact fairness and equality with their other students. . . . A medical contemporary argues that this affair proves how unwise it was to admit women to the University of Edinburgh—such admission being, as is asserted, the natural source of 'constant squabbles.' But most unprejudiced people, judging the case at first sight, would surely rather see here the evil of a partial, restricted, and permissive legislation. If women have a claim to medical education at all, they have exactly the same claim as men; if they are to be received as students at all, they must certainly be treated with even-handed justice, and not as social or rather academical *pariahs*, to whom the bare crumbs of instruction are vouchsafed as a grace and bounty; while all the honours and rewards are to be reserved to their male competitors. Looking at the thing for a moment, merely in the interests of the young men, and as a question of expediency, we cannot imagine anything much worse for their moral guidance than to find that women are indeed to compete with them, but so shackled that they can never win; or rather that, if they do win, the prizes will be snatched from their grasp and given to men whom they have beaten. We have heard that, in hotb classes where the ladies have this year studied, a very unusual access of zeal and energy has been noticed among the gentlemen in the other section of the class—a happy effect of such competition, which has often been observed in the mixed colleges of America, and which surely need not be neutralised here by the providence of the Senatus."—*Scotsman*, April 15, 1870.

"The Senatus has, by a small majority, confirmed Professor Crum Brown's decision with regard to Miss Pecbey and the Hope Scholarship, on the grounds previously presumed by us. But these grounds, if so they may be called, are in our opinion insufficient to deprive Miss Pecbey of the Scholarship. Whatever may be our views regarding the advisability of ladies studying medicine, the University of Edinburgh professed to open its gates to them on equal terms with the other students; and unless some better excuse be forthcoming in explanation of the decision of the Senatus, we cannot help thinking that the University has done no less an injustice to itself than to one of its most distinguished students."—*British Medical Journal*, April 16, 1870.

#### NOTE J, p. 96.

For the credit of the profession, I append also the following indignant protest from the chief medical paper:—



"There are very varying opinions abroad in the medical profession and among the public, as to the advisability of allowing women to practise medicine. There are still more serious and widely-spread doubts as to the possibility of educating ladies in the same lecture rooms and dissecting rooms with male students. But, until last week, we were not aware that any one in the profession, or out of it, held that the mere fact of ladies wishing to be educated in common with men, in order that they might make sure of receiving the highest and most thorough scientific training, justified those who held contrary opinions in loading them with abuse and vulgar insult. It has been reserved for Dr Laycock, professor in the famous University of Edinburgh, to set an example which, we trust, even the least courteous and gentlemanly of first-year's students will hesitate to follow. . . . We shall only remark that if the coarsest of those few students who still keep alive the bad traditions of the Boh Sawyer period had given utterance to the insinuations which were used by this distinguished Professor, we should simply have shrugged our shoulders, and concluded that the delinquent would be at once expelled with ignominy from his school. Unfortunately there are no such punishments for highly-placed men like Dr Laycock, but at the least we can express the deep indignation and disgust which we are certain every gentleman in the profession must feel at the outrage of which he has been guilty."—*Lancet*, April 30, 1870.

#### NOTE K, p. 101.

The following are the papers referred to in the text :—

##### (1.)—*Letter from the Lady Students.*

"MY LORN ANN GENTLEMEN,—We, the undersigned registered students of medicine, beg to lay before you the following facts, and to request your kind attention to them :—

"On applying in the usual course for students' tickets of admission to attend the practice of the Royal Infirmary, we were informed by the clerk that the Managers were not prepared to issue tickets to *female* medical students. We earnestly request you to reconsider this decision on the following grounds :—

"1. That the authorities of the University of Edinburgh and of the School of the College of Physicians and Surgeons have admitted our right to study medicine with a view to graduation.

"2. That an important and indispensable part of medical education consists in attending the practice of a medical and surgical hospital, and that the regulations of the Licensing Boards require, as part of the curriculum of study, two years' attendance at a 'general hospital which accommodates not fewer than eighty patients, and possesses a distinct staff of physicians and surgeons.'

"3. That the only hospital in Edinburgh possessing the required qualifications is the Royal Infirmary, and that exclusion from that institution would therefore preclude the possibility of our continuing our course of medical study in this city.

"4. That, in the present state of divided opinion on the subject, it is possible that such a consummation may give satisfaction to some ; but we cannot suppose that your honourable Board would wish to put yourselves in the attitude of rendering null and void the decisions of the authorities of the University of which we are matriculated students, and of the School of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, where we are now attending the classes of anatomy and surgery.

"5. That it has been the invariable custom of the Managers to grant tickets of admission to students of the University and of Surgeons' Hall, and that, as far as we are aware, no statute of the Infirmary limits such admission to students of one sex only.

"6. That the advertised terms on which the wards of the Infirmary are open to all registered and matriculated students were such as to leave no doubt on our minds that we should be admitted ; if, therefore, our exclusion should be finally determined, we shall suffer great pecuniary loss and damage by this departure of the Managers from their advertised regulations.

"7. That if we are granted admission to the Infirmary by your honourable Board, there are physicians and surgeons on the hospital staff who will gladly afford us the necessary clinical instruction, and find no difficulty in doing so. In support of the above assertion, we beg to enclose the accompanying papers, marked A. and B.

"8. That we are fellow-students of systematic and theoretical surgery with the rest of Dr Watson's class in Surgeons' Hall, and are therefore unable to see what legitimate objection can be raised to our also attending with them his hospital visit.

"9. That a large proportion of the patients in the Infirmary being women, and women being present in all the wards as nurses, there can be nothing exceptional in our presence there as students.

"10. That in our opinion no objection can be raised to our attending clinical teaching, even in the male wards, which does not apply with at least equal force to the present instruction of male students in the female wards.

"11. That we are unable to believe it to be in consonance with the wishes of the majority of the subscribers and donors to the Infirmary (among whom are perhaps as many women as men) that its educational advantages should be restricted to students of one sex only, when students of the other sex also form part of the regular medical classes.

"We beg respectfully to submit the above considerations to the notice of your honourable Board, and trust that you will reconsider your recent decision, which threatens to do us so great an injury, and that you will issue directions that we, who are *bona fide* medical students, registered in the Government register by authority of the General Council of Medical Education and Registration of the United Kingdom, be henceforth admitted to your wards on the same terms as other students.—We are, my Lord and Gentlemen, yours obediently,

"SOPHIA JEX-CLARE, MARY EDITH PECHEY, ISABEL J. THORNE, MATILDA C.

"CHAPLIN, HELEN EVANS, MARY A. ANDERSON, EMILY BOVELL."

"November 5, 1870, 15 Buccleuch Place."

November 5, 1870.

*Paper A.*—"We, the undersigned physicians and surgeons of the Royal Infirmary, desire to signify our willingness to allow female students of medicine to attend the practice of our wards, and to express our opinion that such attendance would in no way interfere with the full discharge of our duties towards our patients and other students.—J. HUGHES BENNETT, GEORGE W. BALFOUR, PATRICK HERON WATSON."

In *paper B*, Dr Matthews Duncan and Dr Joseph Bell expressed their readiness, if suitable arrangements could be made, to teach the female students in the wards separately.

(2.)—*Letter from Dr Handyside and Dr Watson.*

November 5, 1870.

"MY LORD AND GENTLEMEN,—As lecturers in the Edinburgh Medical School, we beg most respectfully to approach your honourable Board, on behalf of the eight female students of this school whom, we understand, you object to admit to the practice of the Royal Infirmary. On their behalf we beg to state:—

"1. That they are regularly registered students of medicine in this school.

"2. That they are at present attending, along with the other students, our course of anatomy, practical anatomy, demonstrations of anatomy, and systematic surgery, in the school at Surgeons' Hall.

"3. That as teachers of anatomy and surgery respectively, we find no difficulty in conducting our courses to such mixed classes composed of male and female students, sitting together on the same benches; and that the presence of those eight female students has not led us to alter or modify our course of instruction in any way.

"4. That the presence of the female students, so far from diminishing the numbers entering our classes, we find both the attendance and the actual numbers already enrolled are larger than in previous sessions.

"5. That in our experience in these mixed classes the demeanour of the students is more orderly and quiet, and their application to study more diligent and earnest, than during former sessions, when male students alone were present.

"6. That, in our opinion, if practical bedside instruction in the examination and treatment of cases is withheld from the female pupils by the refusal to them of access as medical students to the practice of the Infirmary, we must regard the value of any systematic surgical course thus rendered devoid of daily practical illustration, as infinitely less than the same course attended by male pupils, who have the additional advantage of the hospital instruction under the same teacher.

"7. That the surgical instruction, being deprived of its practical aspect by the exclusion of the female pupils from the Infirmary, and therefore from the wards of their systematic surgical teacher, the knowledge of these female students may very reasonably be expected to suffer, not only in class-room examinations, but in their capacity to practise their profession in after life.

"8. That our experience of mixed classes leads us to the conviction that the attendance of the female students at the ordinary hospital visit, along with the male students, cannot certainly be more objectionable to the male students and the male patients than the presence of the ward nurses, or to the female patients than the presence of the male students.

"9. That the class of society to which these eight female students belong, together

with the reserve of manner, and the serious and reverent spirit in which they devote themselves to the study of medicine, make it impossible that any impropriety could arise out of their attendance upon the wards as regards either patients or male pupils.

"In conclusion, we trust that your honourable Board may see fit, on considering these statements, to resolve not to exclude these female students from the practice of, at all events, those physicians and surgeons who do not object to their presence at the ordinary visit along with the other students.

"Such an absolute exclusion of female pupils from the wards of the Royal Infirmary as such a decision of your honourable Board would determine, we could not but regard as an act of practical injustice to pupils who, having been admitted to the study of the medical profession, must have their further progress in their studies barred if hospital attendance is refused them.—We are, my Lord and Gentlemen, your obedient servants,

"P. D. HANNYSIDE, PATRICK HERON WATSON."

At a meeting of the lecturers of the Extra-mural School, held in Surgeons' Hall, on Wednesday, Nov. 9, the following resolution was proposed and carried, a corresponding communication being laid before the Managers at their meeting on Saturday, Nov. 12, 1870 :—

"That the extra-mural lecturers in the Edinburgh Medical School do respectfully approach the Managers of the Royal Infirmary, petitioning them not to offer any opposition to the admission of the female students of medicine to the practice of the institution."

The following letter was also submitted at the next meeting :—

"15 Buccleuch Place, Nov. 13, 1870.

"MY LORD AND GENTLEMEN,—To prevent any possible misconception, I beg leave, in the name of my fellow-students and myself, to state distinctly that, while urgently requesting your honourable Board to issue to us the ordinary students' tickets for the Infirmary (as they alone will 'qualify' for graduation), we have, in the event of their being granted, no intention whatever of attending in the wards of those physicians and surgeons who object to our presence there, both as a matter of courtesy, and because we shall be already provided with sufficient means of instruction in attending the wards of those gentlemen who have expressed their perfect willingness to receive us.—I beg, my Lord and Gentlemen, to subscribe myself your obedient servant, SOPHIA JEX-BLAKE."

"To the Honourable the Managers of the Royal Infirmary."

---

### NOTE L, p. 102.

As ballads are said to be even more significant than laws of the popular feeling, I do not apologise for appending the following :—

#### THE CHARGE OF THE FIVE HUNDRED ;

##### A LAY OF MODERN ATHENS.

(Suggested by a recent Students' Song, containing the following verse :—

*"The little band plied the battering ram,  
With General Blake at its head,  
When 'specials' rose five hundred strong,  
And raised the siege—they fled,  
Brave Boys !"*)

ONCE more the trumpets sound to arms !  
Once more ring forth war's wild alarms !  
Once more be Scotia's host poured forth  
To guard the bulwarks of the North—

The foe is o'er the Tweed !

Bring forth the banner Flodden saw,  
Rear high the standard of the war !  
Let every Gael in battle stand,  
To drive the invader from the land—  
Speed to the rescue, speed !



What mean the rushing footsteps fleet?  
 What mean the squadrons in the street?  
 "Five hundred specials" now appearing—  
 Five hundred voices hoarsely cheering,  
     Wild and disorderly!  
 Strange oaths pollute the evening air,  
 Foul jests the banners proudly bear;  
 What mean these hands in fierce array?  
 Champions of "delicacy" they,  
     And manly modesty.

Then marked the hard who stood afar  
 The gallant leaders of the war—  
 The plumed crest of Andrew Wood,  
 Who for his sons in battle stood,  
     A Christison hard by!  
 A Turner, Laycock, Lister too,  
 All met for deeds of derring-do;  
 Gillespie, Douglas (Oh, that shame  
 Should fall on that time-honoured name!),  
     Dun-Edin's chivalry.

To arms! to arms! the foe is nigh,  
 "Five hundred specials" do or die!  
 Admiring Europe's eyes are cast  
 On Scotia's greatest fight, and last,  
     O'er her Infirmary!  
 Press on! press on! Immortal gods!  
 What matter if o'erwhelming odds  
 Make others blush—they know no shame,  
 "Brave boys!" led on by chiefs of name  
     To glorious victory!

The foe at last! With modest mien  
 And gentle glance, at length are seen  
 The seven women, whom to crush  
 The noble hundreds onward rush,  
     Undaunted to the fray!  
 What if in idle tales of yore  
 The man to guard the woman swore!  
 Such trash is bygone!—*now* men stand  
 To guard their *craft* from female hand,  
     In nineteenth century!

"*Women* to claim our lordly state!"  
 Cries Reverend Phin in fierce debate.  
 "*Women* to strive *our* gains to share!"  
 Shrieks Andrew Wood in wild despair,  
     "While five fair sons have I!"  
 "That *English* girls should thus aspire!"  
 Quoth Christison in Scottish ire.  
 "Though their princess to Scotland come,  
 We'll drive these errant damsels home,  
     For hospitality!"

"Great is Diana!" loudly cry,  
 Be imprecations heard on high!  
 Be mud upgathered from the street,  
 And flung with rihaud oaths, to greet  
     The dreadful enemy!  
 Seven women yield, they must confess  
 On t'other side is *major vis*;  
 Glorious Five hundred, O rejoice!  
 Swell, each "brave boy" with tuneful voice,  
     Pæans of victory!

*Scotsman*, Feb. 10, 1871.

## NOTE M, p. 103.

The following letter is an excellent illustration of the indignation felt by the more manly students at the events referred to :—

“EDINBURGH, November 19, 1870.

“SIR,—As a certain class of medical students are doing their utmost to make the name of medical student synonymous with all that is cowardly and degrading, it is imperative upon all those who wish to be regarded as men, either individually or collectively, to come forward and express, in the strongest possible terms, their detestation of the proceedings which have characterised and dishonoured the opposition to ladies pursuing the study of medicine in Edinburgh. In the name, then, of all that is courteous and manly, I, as a student of medicine, most indignantly protest against such scenes as were enacted at the College of Surgeons on the evenings of Thursday and Friday last, and indeed on several occasions during the week.

“I would it were possible to point out to public execration the movers and actors in such scenes; but it is difficult to decide where the responsibility begins.

“Are only the hot-headed youths to be blamed who hustle and hoot at ladies in the public streets, and by physical force close the College gates before them? Or are we to trace their outrageous conduct to the influence of the class room, where their respected professor meanly takes advantage of his position as their teacher to elicit their mirth and applause, to arouse their jealousy and opposition, by directing unmanly innuendoes at the lady students? If such conduct be permissible on the part of the professors, alas for the school whose teachers have not even but one halfpenny-worth of manliness to their intolerable deal of nastiness, or boasted philanthropy, as the case may be, and whose students crowd the academic precincts to hustle, hoot at, cover with mud, and even to strike at, ladies who have always shown themselves to be gentle and noble women.

“The current report is, that these disgraceful outrages were originally and principally carried out by students of the College of Surgeons. This is contrary to fact. Certainly the majority of them conducted themselves in a most contemptible manner, roused, not by a word or look from the ladies, but by the possibility of being outstripped by them in the race for honours; and therefore did they elect to end the rivalry by an appeal to brute force. The truth, however, is that the rioters were called together by a missive, circulated by the students in the *Chemistry Class of the University* on Friday morning, on the back of which was written, “To be opened by those who signed the petition to the managers against the admission of female students.” This missive called upon the petitioners to assemble at the College of Surgeons before four o’clock, for the purposes which they so thoroughly carried out. The proceedings of Friday will therefore enable the public now to judge of the value which the majority of the managers of the Infirmary ought to have attached to the prayers of such petitioners. Moreover, the professor who is to receive the complimentary address which is being got up by the same memorialists for his exertions in their cause, must feel highly flattered by the implied association.

“What now is to be done with this vexed question of female education? Will it be settled by continuing those brutal exhibitions, or by asking the ladies to withdraw? Neither course is likely to prove successful. Another and a more honourable course has been suggested by some of the original memorialists, who—considering their honour dearer to them than their sympathies—declare that the blot can only be wiped away by their joining to aid the ladies who have been so thwarted and so abused in obtaining the object for which they have wrought so hard and endured so bravely.—I am, &c., VIR.”—*Scotsman*, November 22, 1870.

## NOTE N, p. 107.

The following is the petition referred to :—

“*To the honourable the Managers of the Royal Infirmary.*

“MY LORD AND GENTLEMEN,—We, the undersigned Students of Medicine, moved solely by feelings of honour and justice, desire to approach your honourable board on behalf of our female fellow-students, whom, we understand, you object to admit to the practice of the Infirmary, under any circumstances whatever.

“We do not pretend to offer any opinion on the question of mixed classes, or on the medical education of women; but we consider that, as the University of Edinburgh has admitted those ladies as students of medicine, and as they have now been engaged for some time in striving honourably and successfully to gain a knowledge

of our profession, it is great injustice to attempt to bar their further progress by refusing them permission to attend the practice of the Infirmary.

"We also have certain pretensions to feelings of decency and morality, but we are not aware that the lady students have either attempted or succeeded in outraging them. On the contrary, our feelings have been outraged by the unthinking and misguided of those of our own class who oppose them; for their disgraceful actions we would seek to atone by asking your honourable Board to make some arrangement by which the ladies may be admitted to the practice of the wards.

"As a matter of compromise, we would respectfully request that the ladies be admitted to the wards of the three medical gentlemen who are willing to receive them. On our part we beg leave to express our perfect willingness to attend with them in considering the most serious and delicate cases in the wards.

"We feel proud to assert our ability to study those cases from scientific and philanthropic points of view, with those feelings of delicacy and kindness which ought to actuate every medical man who has female patients under his care."

---

#### NOTE O, p. 109.

The results of the winter session 1869-70 have been given in the text. During the succeeding summer session all the lady students (six in number) appeared in the prize lists in both classes which they attended, viz., Botany and Natural History. During the next winter, 1870-71, the classes taken were Anatomy and Surgery. Out of seven ladies, three were in honours in Anatomy (one of them in two departments), and four in Surgery. During the summer of 1871 there were five lady medical students in the Botany Class, and of these three appeared in the prize lists,—one of them in two departments. During the winter 1871-72, nine ladies attended Chemistry, and, of these, seven appeared in first-class honours, Miss Pechey, in this her second course, obtaining 100 per cent.; nine also attended Physiology, and, of these, two obtained first-class and three second-class honours; six being also in honours in Practical Physiology.

It must be understood that, in the above statement, I have included only those ladies who were regular students of medicine; other ladies, on several occasions, joined the classes, and also appeared in the prize lists.

---

#### NOTE P, p. 110.

##### "COMMITTEE FOR SECURING A COMPLETE MEDICAL EDUCATION TO WOMEN IN EDINBURGH.

"In view of the determined opposition from certain quarters which has met every effort made by ladies to obtain a medical education in Edinburgh, it was resolved, in January 1871, that a Committee should be formed, comprising all those who felt the injustice of the present arbitrary exclusion of women from the medical profession, and who desired to co-operate in the following objects:—(1.) To arrive at a thorough understanding of the real difficulties of the case, distinguishing clearly between those hindrances which are interposed by prejudice or self-interest, and the real obstacles (if any) which are inherent in the question. (2.) To secure the admission of women to Edinburgh University on the ordinary terms, though not necessarily in the same classes with men. (3.) To provide the means of qualifying Hospital instruction in Edinburgh for all ladies who are registered students of medicine.

"To these primary objects the circumstances of the case have subsequently led the Committee to add the following:—(4.) To make such temporary arrangements as may be required to provide the ladies with qualifying instruction, in accordance with the present incomplete regulations of the University, until such time as the authorities themselves may see fit to make complete and adequate arrangements. (5.) To co-operate, from time to time, with the lady students, whenever necessary, and especially to aid them in obtaining such legal assistance as may be required to ascertain and assert their rights as matriculated students of the University, and as registered students of medicine.

"Of this Committee the Lord Provost of Edinburgh consented to act as chairman;

and the following ladies and gentlemen constituted the original Executive Committee : The Right Hon. The Lord Provost ; Dr G. W. Balfour ; Professor Bennett, M.D. ; Dowager Countess of Buchan ; Mrs Hill Burton ; Professor Calderwood ; Treasurer Colston ; Andrew Coventry, Esq. ; James Cowan, Esq. ; Mrs Fleeming Jenkin ; Mrs Henry Kingsley ; Professor Lorimer ; Professor Masson ; Miss Agnes M'Laren ; David M'Laren, Esq. ; Dr Macnair ; John Muir, Esq., D.C.L. ; Mrs Nichol ; Dr Niven ; Alexander Nicholson, Esq. ; Admiral Sir W. Ramsay, K.C.B. ; Dr Heron Watson ; Miss Eliza Wigham. W. S. Reid, Esq., *Hon. Treasurer* ; Miss L. Stevenson, *Hon. Secretary*."

---

NOTE Q, pp. 110, 120.

The case, drawn up by order of the Committee and submitted to Counsel, contained the facts relating to the Edinburgh lady students, which are narrated in the text, and further proceeded, as follows :—

" . . . It is stated in 'Maitland's History of Edinburgh' that the first mention of erecting a College in Edinburgh was found in the will of Robert Reid, Bishop of Orkney, who, dying in 1558, bequeathed eight thousand Scottish merks towards founding a College 'for the education of youth.'

"In the subsequent benefactions and charters granted by Queen Mary in 1566, and by King James in 1582, no stipulation is made as to the sex of the students for whose benefit the College was to be established ; and in 1583 proclamation was made inviting 'all who were inclined to become scholars therein' to enter their names in a certain book opened for the purpose.

"The older University of Glasgow was founded under a Bull granted by Pope Nicholas V. at the suit of James II. of Scotland, and in this Bull it was expressly stated that the University of Bologna was to be followed as a model, and that the doctors, masters, and students of Glasgow were to enjoy all the privileges and rights possessed by those of Bologna. There is abundant historic evidence that women were never excluded from the University of Bologna, but frequently studied and took degrees there during the Middle Ages, and that no less than seven women at different times filled professorial chairs in this University, three of them being in the Medical Faculty, viz. :—

"Dorothea Bucca, Professor of Medicine, early in the fifteenth century ; Anna Morandi Mazzolini, Professor of Anatomy, 1750 ; Maria Della Donne, Professor of Midwifery, 1810.

"It appears that the University of Edinburgh was founded generally on the same model, and the University Calendar states that 'in 1621 an Act was passed by the Scotch Parliament which ratified to the University, in ample form, all the rights, immunities, and privileges enjoyed by other Universities in the kingdom.

"There does not appear, in any of the statutes or ordinances subsequently issued, any regulation that male students alone should attend the University ; nor in the recent Act of 1858 is there any such regulation. As a matter of fact, no applications for admission to the University of Edinburgh seem to have been made by women until the year 1869, as above mentioned.

"In the Universities (Scotland) Act of 1858, section 12, power was given to the University Court 'to effect improvements in the internal arrangements of the University, after due communication with the Senatus Academicus, and with the sanction of the Chancellor, provided that all such proposed improvements shall be submitted to the University Council for their consideration.'

"By the same act (section 21), provision was made for 'providing additional teaching by means of assistants to the Professors in any professorships already established or to be established,' and several assistants were accordingly appointed by the Commissioners under the Act ; and, subsequently, the Senatus appointed certain other assistants, and made them allowances out of the University revenues. None of these assistants have, however, hitherto delivered courses of lectures qualifying for graduation, though there does not appear to be any clause in the Act which forbids their doing so. The only course of instruction qualifying for medical graduation which is given entirely by an assistant is that of practical chemistry.

"During the illness or absence of professors, temporary substitutes to lecture in their stead have frequently been appointed by the Senatus, with the sanction of the University Court."

The following Queries were not all asked in the first instance, but in part on a subsequent occasion (see p. 120) ; as, however, they were all

submitted on the same case, and concern the same subject, I give them here consecutively, arranged in the order in which the Opinions obtained thereon were presented to the Senatus or University Court :—

*“Query 1.*—In the permission given to women to study ‘for the profession of medicine’ in the University of Edinburgh (bearing date November 12, 1869), was it involved in clauses 1, 2, and 6, that they should be allowed to pass the ordinary professional examinations and to proceed to the degree of M.D. in the University, subject only to the restrictions laid down in the said regulations; and is it therefore incumbent on the Medical Faculty to admit them to the necessary examinations to the extent of the subjects in which they are already qualified to pass?

*“Opinion.*—Reading the regulations referred to in connection with the resolutions of the Medical Faculty which were approved of by the Senatus, the University Court, and the General Council, we think that their import and meaning is that, subject to the restrictions laid down in the regulations, women shall be allowed not merely to qualify themselves for the ordinary professional examinations with a view to obtain a medical degree in the University, but also, when so qualified, to be admitted to these examinations. We are, therefore, of opinion that it is the duty of the Medical Faculty to admit them to examination accordingly.

*“Query 2.*—If this was not involved, is it in the power of the Senatus, either alone or in conjunction with the University Court, to accord the required permission to admit them to professional examination with a view to graduation?

*“Opinion.*—Upon the ground of keeping faith with the women who have, in reliance upon the regulations and in compliance with the terms thereby prescribed, qualified themselves for professional examination with a view to graduation, we are of opinion that the Senatus is entitled to direct that they shall be admitted to examination; and we also think that, without any further direction or authority than the regulations necessarily imply, the Medical Faculty is entitled to admit them to examination.

*“Queries 3 and 4.*—Is it competent for the Senatus, either directly or in conjunction with the other University authorities, to appoint special lecturers to deliver qualifying courses of lectures to women who are matriculated and registered students of medicine, when such instruction cannot be obtained from the professors of the special subjects in question? Is it competent for the Senatus or other University authorities so far to relax the ordinary regulations with respect to extra-mural classes as to authorise women to attend outside the University those courses of lectures which are denied to them by the Professors within the walls, such courses being held to qualify for graduation beyond the number of *four*, as contemplated in the present regulations?

*“Opinion.*—If the existing regulations with respect to graduation in medicine stand upon statutes passed by the University Commissioners, whose powers have now expired, it is competent for the University Court to alter them with the written consent of the Chancellor and with the approval of Her Majesty in Council. This is provided by section 19 of the Act of 1858. If they stand on the authority of the Court, or of any other power in the University itself, we should think that they may be altered by the University Court under section 12 of the Act, ‘after due communication with the Senatus Academicus, and with the sanction of the Chancellor,’ but with the proviso that the proposed alteration ‘shall be submitted to the University Council for their consideration.’ In one or other of these ways it appears to us that any provision which may be deemed necessary, or proper and reasonable, for enabling women to complete their medical studies, with a view to graduation, may be made.”

*“Query 5.*—Whether the Senatus, University Court, University Council and Chancellor, had collectively the power of granting to women the permission to matriculate as students as they did in 1869, and whether the regulations issued officially (November 12, 1869) are valid as regards such matriculation?

*“Opinion.*—We are of opinion that the University Court, in virtue of the powers conferred upon it by the 12th section (2) of the Act 1858, have power, after communication with the Senatus, and with the sanction of the Chancellor, and after the University Council have considered the subject, to grant permission to women (as they did in 1869) to matriculate as students, and the resolutions of the Court in that year are valid.

*“Query 6.*—Whether the medical Professors are exonerated from obligation to teach, in some way or other, all matriculated students, by the fact, that, in clause 3 of the regulations quoted above, it is merely stated that they ‘shall be permitted to have separate classes for women?’

*“Opinion.*—The University Court having statutory powers to ‘effect’ improvements in the ‘internal arrangements of the University,’ and it being within their power, under this enactment, to allow women to be educated at the Univer-



sity, we are of opinion that this resolution must be carried out in good faith and obeyed by the Professors. The third resolution of the University Court of November 1869, which '*permits*' the Professors to have separate classes for women, in no way derogates from the resolution of the Court that women 'shall be admitted to the study of medicine.'

"*Query 7.*—In case such women as are matriculated students of medicine in the University are refused instruction by the individual medical Professors, what is their legal mode of redress, and against whom should it be directed?

"*Opinion.*—We are of opinion that the University Court can compel, by action, the medical Professors to obey the resolutions of November, 1869, by holding separate classes for the education of women. With respect to the title of the women, we think that those of them who have matriculated and passed the preliminary examinations have a title, and may enforce their rights by action. The proper form of action is, we think, a declarator against the Professors refusing to obey the resolution of the University Court, with petitory conclusions to the effect that they should be ordained to hold separate classes for the instruction of the pursuers, they receiving their due remuneration.

"*Query 8.*—Whether, in the first constitution or charter of the University, or in any of the subsequent statutes, there is anything which limits the benefits of the University to male students.

"*Opinion.*—The Charter of Erection and Confirmation of the 'College of Edinburgh' by King James VI., dated 14th April, 1582, granted certain lands and revenues to the Magistrates and Town Council of Edinburgh, with a license to employ those revenues, and such others as well-disposed persons might bestow on them, in the erecting of suitable buildings for the use of professors and 'scholars' of grammar, humanity, and languages, philosophy, theology, medicine, and laws, and other liberal sciences. The King, by this charter (as interpreted by decision of the Courts), delegated to, or conferred upon, the magistrates and Town Council the character of patron and founder of this new seminary of education. The powers of superintendence and control thus conferred upon the Magistrates and Council remained with them till the Act of 1858 was passed, by which the more important powers were transferred to the University Court. The Magistrates and Council never conferred upon the College any independent constitution, so as to enable the members of it to exercise any power of internal government. As founders, patrons, and delegates intrusted by the royal grant, the Magistrates and Council remained in the full right of management, regulation, and tutelage of their own institution.

"An Act of Parliament was passed in 1621 (c. 79), which may be considered as the charter of erection of the University. It narrates the charter of 1582, and the licence thereby given to found a College and choose Professors, and sets forth the King's zeal for the growth of learning, and his purpose to grant the College all immunities enjoyed by other colleges. The statute then confirms the erection of the College, and ratifies all the mortifications made to the town by the King or others towards its support. It bestows on the College the name of 'King James' College,' and grants to the Magistrates 'in favour of the said burgh of Edinburgh, patrons of the said College, and of the College, and of rectors, regents, bursars, and *students* within the same, all liberties, freedoms, immunities, and privileges pertaining to a free College, and that in as ample a form and large manner as any College has or bruekis within His Majesty's realm.'

"The statute concludes with ordaining a new charter to issue, if need be, for erecting the College, with all such privileges and immunities. No such charter was ever issued; but the statute itself may be held equivalent to a charter. It was a charter in favour of the Magistrates and Council as founders and patrons, and in no way prejudiced, but on the contrary confirmed their power of superintendence, control, and regulation of all matters concerning the internal government of the University.

"We are of opinion that, in virtue of the powers they thus possessed, the Magistrates and Town Council could at any time, during their 266 years of University rule, have done what the University Court did in 1869—grant permission to women to be educated at the University.

"On examining the records, we find that the superintendence of the patrons was active and constant. They made, at various times during the two centuries and a half while their jurisdiction lasted, sets of laws and regulations for the College, which embrace all things connected with the duties and rights of professors and students, the series and order of studies, the days and hours of lecture, the books to be read, the conduct of students in and out of College hours, the modes of trial and graduation, the attendance of the professors at their classes, attendance at church, dress to be worn by students, fees to be paid, &c., &c.

"All these regulations proceed on the footing that only male students attended the University; many of them were inapplicable to females, and we cannot find any trace of its being contemplated by the patrons that females might be students. And we do not find any evidence of a female having attended the University.

"Therefore, while we are of opinion that the Magistrates and Council had the power to pass a regulation authorising the attendance of women at the University, and to compel the professors to teach them, yet as they never passed any such regulation, no women could have insisted upon admission to University education as a legal right prior to 1869.

"The University Court, by sec. 12 (2), are now vested with all the powers of internal management and regulation formerly possessed by the Magistrates and Council; they have done what the latter never did, although they lawfully might. They have, by their resolution of November 1869, given to women the right to demand, equally with male students, admission to the University."

---

### NOTE R, p. 111.

"The extraordinary history of the vicissitudes endured by the lady students seems at last to have reached its most extraordinary phase. It appears, as stated in our columns of yesterday, that on Saturday last the Medical Faculty of the University of Edinburgh—a body which, collectively, forms one of the law-makers of the College—passed a vote by a majority whereby they instructed their Dean deliberately to break a law of the University, or rather expressly 'interdicted' him from complying with it. What makes the matter the more remarkable is that this special law was in the first instance inaugurated by themselves, and subsequently approved by the Senatus and other authorities, and incorporated in the official regulations published in the 'Calendar.'

It would seem clear enough that a decision which had been deliberately confirmed by each university authority successively, and which had thus become law, could not be disturbed by any one except after an equally formal process of revocation. It is, however, well known that, though all the bodies enumerated passed the above regulations by a majority, there was in most cases a dissatisfied minority, who wished that all privileges should be withheld from the lady students. It would have surprised no one to hear that a formal attempt had been made to obtain the withdrawal of the privileges conferred; but the public were probably sufficiently astonished to learn yesterday that, though no such open and honourable attempt had been made, a secret *coup d'état* was planned, by which it was apparently hoped, at the very last moment, when no appeal to the Senatus, or other authorities was possible, to crush the hopes of the medical ladies, at least for the present year. At the Faculty meeting to which we have referred, a vote was actually passed to 'interdict' the Dean, whose friendliness to the ladies was well known, from giving to any women who were about to join the medical class the papers necessary to enable them to pass the preliminary examination in Arts, which is indispensable before registration—this examination having been not only previously allowed, but actually passed by numerous ladies on no less than four occasions! At this same notable meeting, a vote was also passed that the Medical Faculty should disregard alike their own previous resolutions, the official regulations of the 'Calendar,' and the tickets of admission already paid for and obtained by those other ladies who are now ready to proceed to their first professional examination; and, accordingly, a letter was sent to each of these three ladies, informing them that their tickets had been granted 'in error,' and that they could not be examined 'without the sanction of the Senatus Academicus,' as if that sanction had not been already given in the most emphatic manner!

"The story is not a pleasant one. That a minority, obliged to acquiesce in an act of liberality on the part of the majority, should, when unable to prevail by fair means, endeavour to compass their end by a side-wind and in an underhand manner, is sufficiently discreditable; but that, rather than relinquish their own dogged resolution to obstruct the ladies, these Professors should deliberately abstain from all previous warning of the means they intended to employ—should allow many months of severe study to be passed with a definite aim and hope, and should then silently dig a pitfall at the very threshold of the door through which the ladies must pass, and hope, by an arbitrary exercise of authority against a few wholly unprepared women, completely to destroy their prospects, for the present year at least—is something almost too monstrous to be believed, did the circumstances admit of any doubt in the matter. Whether these medical gentlemen really supposed that, by their unsupported fiat, they could set aside all the existing regulations of the University, or whether they trusted to the ladies' want of knowledge in legal matters not to challenge their authority, it is of



course impossible to say, but one would rather believe in the ignorance of law implied by the former alternative, than in the lamentable want of honourable feeling that would be conveyed in the latter. Be this as it may, it is not easy to exaggerate the damaging effect that a story of this kind is likely to have on the minds of the public. That such a line of conduct *could* be planned and carried out by a body of men claiming the name of gentlemen, and belonging to a profession that calls itself 'liberal' and 'learned,' is perhaps as striking a proof as could be given of the fatally blinding influence of professional prejudice and unreasoning trades-unionism."

*Scotsman*, Oct. 20, 1872.

"We confess that the conduct of the medical faculty amazes us. Can they suppose that such obstructions are calculated to stop the movement? Why should they not show a little practical sense, and choose their fighting-ground with reasonable judgment? A single Professor, whose classes must be attended according to present regulations, might have hoped successfully to resist the demand that he should teach mixed classes. There are many people who do not look with particular complacency upon the efforts of a few ladies to obtain a place in the medical profession; but paltry persecutions like these, and little dodges sprung upon them suddenly, will assuredly turn the popular tide in their favour. The medical profession seem to think that they have only got to get behind these too devoted students, and shout 'bo!' loud enough to frighten them out of their five wits. They might surely have known Miss Jex-Blake better by this time. Are the Edinburgh Medical Faculty really afraid of the competition of the ladies? Do they look upon them as 'knobsticks,' against whom the doors must be closed in spite of law, reason, and liberty? They are welcome to their fears—narrow as they are—and to their opinions on the question of lady doctors; but we trust that the University of Edinburgh will see that its regulations are maintained. Having given permission to females to study medicine under conditions which are strict enough, and even somewhat hard, the University must prevent any combination of Professors from taking the matter into their own hands, and debarring the ladies from the privileges for which they have so gallantly fought. In the meantime, we congratulate the five ladies on the prompt spirit in which they have repelled the insidious attempt of a majority of the medical faculty—we believe only a very small majority—to cut their studies short. We need not urge them to persevere, for they seem to have that 'faculty' in predominance, but we think we can assure them that every victory that they gain, and every defeat that they suffer, adds to the number of their sympathisers, and breaks down no inconsiderable portion of the mountain of prejudice that they had to face when they commenced their career as students. If the Medical Professors want to defeat them, they must get better advisers, and not court humiliation. Their present counsellor is like Adversity, ugly and venomous in appearance only. Without the 'precious jewel,' the treasure of ill-judged and unreasonable persecutions, which he carries in his head, the little forlorn hope of courageous ladies, whose ranks are thinned from time to time by marriage and other maladies, would hardly be so likely to plant their triumphant flag on the top of the Castle rock at last."

*Glasgow Herald*, October 20, 1871.

#### NOTE S, p. 119.

The following verses are no bad indication of the popular feeling respecting the incidents narrated above, and this is rendered the more characteristic by the national form in which it finds expression:—

#### THE BARRIN' O' OOR DOOR.

(A New Version o' an Auld Sang.)

*Dedicated without special permission to Sir Robert Christison, Bart., and intended to be sung at the next convivial meeting of the "Infirmary Ring."*

BY GAMALIEL GOWKORANDIOSE, M.D.

It fell ahoot the New-Year time,  
And a gay time it was then, oh!  
That the lady students in oor auld toon  
Had a fecht wi' us medical men oh!

*Chorus*—About the barrin' o' oor door weel, weel, weel,  
The barrin' o' oor door weel.

When first they cam' tae learn oor craft  
 We laughed at them in oor sleeve oh!  
 That women could e'er gang on wi' sic wark,  
 What medical man could believe oh!  
*Chorus*—For the barrin', &c.

So we pouched a' the fees they gied tae us  
 For lecture or for Exam. oh!  
 We fleeced them a' as clean and as bare  
 As was ever a sheep or a lamb oh!  
*Chorus*—A' for the barrin' o' oor door, &c.

But when we found they meant to use  
 The knowledge for which they had paid oh!  
 And on the trade o' us medical men  
 Micht mak' a furious raid oh!  
*Chorus*—We began the barrin' o' oor door, &c.

Hech, sirs, tae drive thae women awa'  
 Was a job haith sair and teuch, sirs;  
 It gied Sir Robert and Andrew Wood  
 Vexation and bother eneuch, sirs.  
*Chorus*—Did the barrin' o' oor door, &c.

Oor students got up a bonny bit mob  
 To gie the ladies a fright, sirs;  
 Wi' physical force, Young Physic did wark,  
 Tae get us oot o' oor plight, sirs.  
*Chorus*—And help the barrin' o' oor door, &c.

We frightened the douce Infirmary folks  
 W' stories o' classes mixed, sirs;  
 They werena just true—but what o' that?  
 We a' hae oor ain trade tricks, sirs.  
*Chorus*—For the barrin' o' oor door, &c.

Scandals we spread owre a' the toon  
 Against the ladies' guid fame, sirs;  
 We drove them frae the Infirmary gate,  
 Though some citizen fools cried "Shame," sirs.  
*Chorus*—For the barrin' o' oor door, &c.

But they lived a' scurrilous scandals doon  
 Wi' true feminine perversity—  
 They roused the folk owre a' oor town  
 'Gainst oor clique in the University.  
*Chorus*—For the barrin' o' oor door, &c.

A year gaed by, and then they tried  
 Again tae force their way, sirs,  
 Into the wards we've sworn maun be oors  
 Until oor dying day, sirs.  
*Chorus*—For the barrin' o' oor door, &c.

Sir Robert bullied and cracked his big whip,  
 And Turner put on the screw, sirs;  
 Yet we a' got beaten that New-Year's Day,  
 For the ladies' friends stood true, sirs.  
*Chorus*—Oh! the barrin' o' oor door, &c.

Sir Robert looked blue when he heard o' the vote,  
 And Turner he tore his hair, sirs;  
 He forgot there wasna muckle to tear,  
 Sae deep was his despair, sirs,  
*Chorus*—Aboot the barrin' o' oor door, &c.

And Andrew Wood fell into the airms  
 O' twa o' his "five fair sons," sirs;  
 "Puir bairns," quo' he, "we'll a' starve noo,  
 For oor craft will he over-run, sirs."  
*Chorus*—Oh! the barrin' o' oor door, &c.

And Nicholson whimpered wi' clerical whine,  
 And Muirhead shook his fist, sirs,  
 As he thocht o' how the *Scotsman* wad chaff  
 O' the class he had that day missed, sirs.

*Chorus*—And the harrin' o' oor door, &c.

Lister wept owre his petulant speech,  
 When he swore he'd resign his chair, sirs,  
 If women entered the hospital wards—  
 Eh! noo he repented him sair, sirs.

*Chorus*—For the barrin' o' oor door, &c.

But when we cam to oor senses a',  
 We planned a honny hit plan, sirs,  
 Tae quash the votes o' thae merchant firms  
 That supported tho ladies' men, sir.

*Chorus*—For the harrin' o' oor door, &c.

The firms may leave us—we carena a straw—  
 The Infirmary may sink, sirs,  
 If we may hut keep females aff oor preserve,  
 We carena what folk think, sirs.

*Chorus*—O' the harrin' o' oor door, &c.

The Infirmary meeting against us gaed,  
 But the Court o' Session hefriends us;  
 Oot o' the hospital managing hoard  
 Neither women nor traders shall send us!

*Chorus*—For tho harrin' o' oor door, &c.

Confusion, then, let each man drink  
 To the ladies and their supporters, sirs;  
 For Monopoly's rights let us a' fecht or fa',  
 Or he prayed up small in oor mortars, sirs!

*Chorus*—Ho! for the harrin' o' oor door weel! weel! weel!  
 The harrin' o' oor door weel!

*Scotsman*, Feb. 13, 1872.

#### NOTE T, p. 125.

This correspondence is so remarkable that I subjoin it entire.

##### (1) *To the University Court.*

"15 Buccleuch Place, November 21, 1871.

"GENTLEMEN,—It is now two years since you passed a series of resolutions, dated 12th November 1869, to the effect that 'women shall be admitted to the study of medicine in the University.'

"In the time that has since elapsed, I and those ladies who matriculated with me at that date, have completed one-half of the studies necessary for graduation in the University of Edinburgh. Nearly five months ago, I ventured to point out to the Senatus Academicus that, unless further arrangements were made, it would be impossible for us to complete the studies which we have begun with your express sanction. After pointing out the existing difficulties, I ventured further to make two suggestions, either of which, if adopted, might enable us to complete our education in the University. In reply, however, I was informed that the Senatus, 'having taken the opinion of counsel with reference to the proposals contained in the memorial of date 26th June 1871, find themselves unable to comply with either of those proposals.'

"I understand, however, that since the date referred to, another legal opinion has been obtained from the Lord Advocate and Sheriff Fraser, and has been laid before the Senatus, and by them forwarded to your honourable Court. As, however, the Senatus still appear unwilling to initiate any measure by which we may be relieved from our present difficulties, I feel constrained now to appeal to you, in my own name and that of my fellow-students, to take such action as shall enable us to complete our studies.

"I beg to represent to you that we have all paid matriculation fees for the present year, and are by our tickets declared to be 'Cives Academiæ Edinensis,' and that yet we, who commenced our studies in 1869, are unable during the present session to obtain any further classes whatever towards completing our required course of study.

"We understand from those friends who have taken legal opinion on the subject—and doubtless such opinion will be laid before you simultaneously with this letter—that we are entitled to demand from the University the means of completing our studies, and that, failing any other alternative measures, we can claim the instruction of the Medical Professors to the extent needed to complete our curriculum.

"We beg, therefore, most respectfully to request that, unless any other mode of supplying our needs seems preferable to you, you will vouchsafe to ordain that the Professors, whose courses we are bound by the University regulations to attend, shall give us the requisite instruction.—I beg to subscribe myself, Gentlemen, your obedient servant,  
SOPHIA JEX-BLAKE."

### (2.) *Minute of University Court of January 8, 1872.*

"The University Court have had under consideration the letters of Miss Jex-Blake and Miss Louisa Stevenson, of 21st November, 1871, and other relative documents laid before them on behalf of the women who have been admitted by the regulations of the Court of November 10th, 1869, to study medicine in the University.

"In these papers it is stated that certain Professors of the Faculty of Medicine have declined to give separate classes of instruction to women; and the Court are asked either (1) to extend, in the case of female medical students, the privilege granted by ordinance by the Universities' Commissioners, to lecturers, not being Professors in a university, of qualifying for graduation by their lectures, which privilege is now restricted to four of the prescribed subjects of study; or (2) To authorise the appointment of special lecturers to give, in the University, qualifying courses of instruction in place of those Professors who decline to do so; or (3.) To ordain that the Professors referred to shall themselves give the necessary courses of instruction to women.

"The second course suggested it is not in the power of the Court, or other University authorities, singly or jointly to adopt.

"The third course is equally beyond the power of the Court. The Act of 1858 vests in the Court plenary powers to deal with any Professor who shall fail to discharge his duties, but no Professor can be compelled to give courses of instruction other than those which, by the use and wont of the University, it has been the duty of the holders of his chair to deliver.

"The first of the proposed measures would imply an alteration in one of the ordinances for graduation in medicine (No. 8, clause vi., 4). Such alteration could be made by the University Court only with the consent, expressed in writing, of the Chancellor, and with the approval of Her Majesty in Council.

"But to alter, in favour of female students, rules laid down for the regulation of graduation in medicine would imply an assumption on the part of the Court, that the University of Edinburgh has the power of granting degrees to women. It seems to the Court impossible to them to assume the existence of a power that is questioned in many quarters, and which is both affirmed and denied by eminent counsel. So long as these doubts remain, it would, in the opinion of the Court, be premature to consider the expediency of taking steps to obtain, in favour of female students, an alteration of an ordinance which may be held not to apply to women.

"Though the Court are unable to comply with any of the specific requests referred to, they are at the same time desirous to remove, so far as possible, any present obstacle in the way of a complete medical education being given to women,—provided always that medical instruction to women be imparted in strictly separate classes.

"The Court are of opinion that the question under reference has been complicated by the introduction of the subject of graduation, which is not essential to the completion of a medical or other education. The University of London, which has a special charter for the examination of women, does not confer degrees upon women, but only grants them 'certificates of proficiency.' If the applicants in the present case would be content to seek the examination of women by the University for certificates of proficiency in medicine, instead of University degrees, the Court believe that arrangements for accomplishing this object would fall within the scope of the powers given to them by section 12 of the Universities' (Scotland) Act. The Court would be willing to consider any such arrangements which might be submitted to them."

### (3.) *To the University Court.*

"15 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh, January 18, 1872.

"GENTLEMEN,—I have received from your Secretary a copy of your minute of the 8th instant, and I beg you to allow me most respectfully, but at the same time most emphatically, to protest against the decision therein contained, on the following grounds:—

"1. That when women were admitted to study 'for the profession of medicine' in the University of Edinburgh, and were required to pay the ordinary matriculation fees as *Cives Academicæ Edinensis*, in addition to those for instruction, it was believed to be involved that, subject only to the restrictions laid down in the regulations of November 12, 1869, we should be allowed to complete our education, and should, as a matter of course, proceed to the degree of M.D., no official intimation to the contrary being given to us at the time, nor indeed until now, when we have half completed our University curriculum. You will allow me to remind you further, that we have very big legal authority for believing that these expectations were well founded, and that matriculation does involve necessarily all the privileges of studentship, including graduation, as was indeed recently admitted by a legal Professor, who has always been one of our most determined opponents, when addressing your honourable Court in favour of rescinding the present regulations.

"2. That, except with a view to ultimate graduation, it was quite meaningless to require us to pass, as we did, the preliminary examination in Arts, which has not any necessary connection with the study of medicine itself, but is expressly stated to be 'the first examination for the medical degree.'

"3. That we have all along pursued our studies with a view to the further professional examinations; that, in the resolutions passed by the Medical Faculty on July 1, 1869, it was distinctly stated that 'ladies be allowed to attend medical classes and to receive certificates of attendance qualifying for examination;' that, further, on April 9, 1870, the Senatus Academicus expressly ordained that exactly the same University certificates of attendance should be issued to students of both sexes, for the special purpose of qualifying for professional examination.

"4. That no kind of official notice was ever given to us that a doubt existed respecting our admission to the ordinary professional examinations, until certain of our number had completed their preparations for the first professional examination, and had paid their fees for, and received tickets of admission to, the same; and that, when the matter was brought before the Senatus, it was by them decided that ladies should be admitted to the examination, and accordingly the ladies in question were examined in the ordinary course and passed the examination successfully.

"5. That under the existing Act of Parliament it is impossible for any person to practise medicine under legal sanction, without a distinct 'qualification' as defined by the said Act of Parliament.

"6. That the only 'qualification' which it is in the power of the University of Edinburgh to grant, is the ordinary medical degree, and that no 'certificates of proficiency' would possess the slightest legal value unless a special Act of Parliament was passed making such certificates registrable qualifications.

"7. That the difficulty and expense of procuring such a special Act of Parliament would be very much greater than that of obtaining the sanction of the Queen in Council to such minor alterations in the University Ordinances, as are alone necessary to enable us to complete our education by means of additional extra-mural classes; even if your honourable Court declines to make the necessary arrangements within the University.

"8. That we are informed on high authority that it is at present within the power of your honourable Court, in conjunction with the Senatus, to make the necessary arrangements within the University, without any external sanction; either by ordaining that the present Professors shall instruct women in separate classes, or by appointing special lecturers for that purpose. As regards the former course, I venture to remark that several Professors in the Faculty of Arts are already delivering two or more lectures daily, and that, as I presume it was always contemplated that each Professor should instruct all matriculated students desiring to study his subject, it is quite conceivable that it might become necessary from the number of students, or otherwise, for the medical Professors also to be required to deliver two courses; and that, therefore, it could hardly be considered a hardship if they should be required to deliver a second course, with proper remuneration for the same, to those matriculated students who are forbidden by the University to attend in the ordinary classes. As regards the second alternative, I believe that it has never been doubted that the Senatus and University Court, conjointly, have the power of appointing any number of assistants or special lecturers in any faculty, if they are required for the efficient performance of the teaching of the University.

"9. That as the main difficulty before your honourable Court seems to be that regarding graduation, with which we are not immediately concerned at this moment, we are quite willing to rest our claims to ultimate graduation on the facts as they stand up to the present date, and in case your honourable Court will now make arrangements whereby we can continue our education, we will undertake not to draw any arguments in favour of our right to graduation from such future arrange-



ments, so that they may at least be made without prejudice to the present legal position of the University.

"10. That we are informed by high legal authorities that we are entitled, as matriculated students, to demand from the University complete arrangements for our instruction, and that we are further entitled to bring an action of declarator to obtain the same from the several Professors if no alternative measures are devised, and that we shall inevitably be driven to pursue this course, with whatever reluctance, if your honourable Court persistently refuses to make, in any form whatever, such arrangements as may enable us to complete our education, and to obtain a legal qualification to practise.

"Earnestly commending the above considerations to your most favourable notice, I have the honour, &c.,  
"SOPHIA JEX-BLAKE."

#### (4.) *From the Secretary of the University Court.*

"University of Edinburgh, 5th February 1872.

"MADAM,—I am desired by the University Court to inform you that your letter, dated the 18th ultimo, has been laid before them and considered.

"In reply, I am to say that in several points of your view of the past history and present position of the question relative to the medical education of women in Edinburgh the Court are unable to concur.

"Without going into the discussions which might be raised on these points, it appears to the Court that it is only necessary for them to enter upon the subject of your ninth paragraph, in which you say:—

"That as the main difficulty before your honourable Court seems to be that regarding graduation, with which we are not immediately concerned at this moment, we are quite willing to rest our claims to ultimate graduation on the facts as they stand up to the present date; and in case your honourable Court will now make arrangements whereby we can continue our education, we will undertake not to draw any arguments in favour of our right to graduation from such future arrangements, so that they may at least be made without prejudice to the present legal position of the University."

"On this I am desired to inform you that you appear to ask no more than was offered by the Court in their resolution of the 8th ultimo, in which it was stated that while the Court were restrained by legal doubts as to the power of the University to grant degrees to women, from considering 'the expediency of taking steps to obtain, in favour of female students, an alteration of an ordinance which might be held not to apply to women,' they were, 'at the same time, desirous to remove, so far as possible, any present obstacle in the way of a complete medical education being given to women: provided always that medical instruction to women be imparted in strictly separate classes.'

"On the assumption, therefore, that while you at present decline the offer made by the Court with reference to certificates of proficiency, you now ask merely that arrangements should be made for completing the medical education of yourself and the other ladies on behalf of whom you write, I am to state that the Court are quite ready to meet your views. If, therefore, the names of extra-academical teachers of the required medical subjects be submitted by yourself, or by the Senatus, the Court will be prepared to consider the respective fitness of the persons so named to be authorised to hold medical classes for women who have in this or former sessions been matriculated students of the University, and also the conditions and regulations under which such classes should be held.

"It is, however, to be distinctly understood that such arrangements are not to be founded on as implying any right in women to obtain medical degrees, or as conferring any such right upon the students referred to.

"I have, &c.,

J. CHRISTISON, Secretary.

#### (5.) *To the University Court.*

"15 Buccleuch Place, February 9, 1872.

"GENTLEMEN,—I beg to thank you sincerely for the resolution to which you came on Monday the 5th inst., and which, if I understand it rightly, will, I trust, prove a satisfactory solution of our present difficulties.

"We will, if you wish it, very gladly prepare and submit to your honourable Court a list of extra-academical lecturers and of gentlemen prepared to qualify as such, who may, with your sanction, instruct us in the various subjects which we have to study; but before doing so, I venture to beg for official confirmation of my interpretation of your late resolution in two essential particulars.

"I trust that I am correct in understanding—

"1. That though you at present give us no pledge respecting our ultimate graduation, it is your intention to consider the proposed extra-mural courses as 'qualifying' for graduation, and that you will take such measures as may be necessary to secure that they will be accepted if it is subsequently determined that the University has the power of granting degrees to women.

"2. That we shall be admitted in due course to the ordinary professional examinations on presentation of the proper certificates of attendance on the said extra-mural classes.

"You will, I am sure, understand that, while we are quite willing to accept present arrangements for instruction without any pledge that they will confer a right to graduation, it would be useless for us to attend any classes which would be incapable of qualifying for graduation, and impossible for us to acquiesce in any agreement which might prejudice the claim which we believe ourselves to possess to the ultimate attainment of the medical degree.—I am, &c., SOPHIA JEX-BLAKE."

(6.) *From the Secretary of the University Court.*

"University of Edinburgh, 24th February 1872.

"MADAM,—Your letter dated 9th instant has been considered by the University Court. In it you say:—

"'I trust that I am correct in understanding—

"'1. That though you at present give us no pledge respecting our ultimate graduation, it is your intention to consider the proposed extra-mural courses as 'qualifying' for graduation, and that you will take such measures as may be necessary to secure that they will be so accepted, if it is subsequently determined that the University has the power of granting degrees to women.

"'II. That we shall be admitted in due course to the ordinary professional examinations on presentation of the proper certificates of attendance on the said extra-mural classes.'

"In reply, I am desired to point out that no extra-mural courses, beyond the number of four allowed by the Ordinance of the Universities Commissioners, could either qualify for graduation, or for the ordinary professional examinations, except under a change in the ordinance; which change could be made only by a resolution of the Court sanctioned by the Chancellor, and approved by the Queen in Council.

"The Court have already declared, in their resolution of the 8th of January last, that they cannot even enter on the consideration of the expediency of such a change in the ordinance until the legality of female graduation has been determined.

"It would not only be premature for the Court to express at present any views or intentions on the points to which you refer, but it would be clearly contrary to their duty to do so. For, supposing the legal question to be decided in a way favourable to your wishes, those points would then doubtless be referred to the Court for their decision, when various parties would probably desire to be heard with regard to them.

"I am to add that in your letter of the 18th January, you appeared merely to ask that the Court 'will now make arrangements whereby we can continue our education,' and that the Court offered, as stated in my letter of the 5th inst., to meet your views in the only way which appeared to lie within their competency. The Court are still of opinion that it is quite impossible for them at present to add anything to that offer."—I have the honour, &c., J. CHRISTISON, Secretary.

NOTE U, p. 133.

I am anxious to guard myself from being supposed to attribute to Scotch nationality the exceptionally bad conduct of certain students in Edinburgh, during 1870-71. I cannot but hope that such behaviour as I have described would have been impossible in any English Medical School, but, in so saying, I do not by any means wish to imply that Scotch students have less good feeling than others, when their superiors set them an example of courtesy. In point of fact, moreover, some of those who took most pains to make themselves obnoxious were not Scotchmen at all, but Englishmen of an extremely low class. Some Scotch lads no doubt behaved very badly, but, on the other hand, the guard of honour (see page 104) was almost wholly composed of Scotch and Irish students, who showed the utmost indignation at the conduct of the rioters.



872

3

DATE DUE

NOV 27 '78

NOV 27 '78

YML

~~MAR 21 1983~~

YALE  
MEDICAL  
LIBRARY

Accession no.

JFF

3

Author

Jex-Blake, S.

Medical women

Call no.

History

R692

872 J

